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The GEM

THE BEST PAPER FOR BRITISH BOYS

2d



HIGH JINKS AT ST. JIM'S! TOM MERRY & CO. HAVE THE—

ST. JIM'S WITHOUT



No masters—no lessons—no restrictions! The juniors of St. Jim's have never known such stirring times as when, by a freak of fate, the school is left masterless! It's a chance for fun and frolic that they make full use of—and how!

CHAPTER 1. The Jonah!

"I HAVE been stwuck—"
"Eh?"

"I have been stwuck—"
"Where?"

"Weally, Blake! I wepeat that I have been stwuck—"
"And I repeat where?" said Jack Blake of the Fourth Form, looking over his chum with a scanning eye, as if in search of the spot where he had been stwuck.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, jammed his eyeglass into his eye and returned Blake's glance with one of lofty reproach.

"Weally, Blake," he said, "I wish you would not play the giddy goat! I was wemarkin' that I have been stwuck—"

"But where?"

"Yes, where," said Tom Merry cheerfully, "and what by, and by whom?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"And did it hurt?" asked Tom Merry.

The hero of the Shell was standing in the road outside the gates of St. Jim's, looking in the direction of Rylcombe. Blake and D'Arcy were in the old stone gateway.

"I wefuse to ansawah such a widiculous question, Tom Mewwy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity. "I wegard you as an ass. I have been stwuck by a thought—"

"Oh, I see!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

"It probably hurt, all the same," said Blake seriously. "Gussy got it in his weakest spot, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy ignored Blake's sarcasm.

"I have been stwuck by a vewy peculiah weflection," he said. "You are aware that our wespacted headmastah, Dr. Holmes, has departed for Southampton to take a little twip for his health?"

"Naturally, ass! Since we saw him off at the station THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,381.

to-day we could hardly fail to be aware of it," answered Blake.

"Pwecisely. You are also aware that Mr. Wailton and Mr. Watchliff, our wespacted Housemastahs, and all the mastahs have made up a party to see the Head as far as Southampton, includin' all the Form-mastahs, and the head pwefects, Kildare and Dawwell and Monteith and Wushden?"

"Quite so?"

"Therefore, what has stwuck me is this—that at the pwesent moment the school is without a mastah of any kind," said Arthur Augustus. "Also, all the pwefects are gone, with a few exceptions, and they don't amount to much. Nobody takes much notice of Knox or Sefton."

"Quite so!"

"Well, I was thinkin', suppose there was a wailway accident—"

"A which?" asked Tom Merry.

"A wailway accident," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Suppose there was a wailway accident, and the mastahs couldn't get back to St. Jim's to-day?"

Blake whistled.

"My hat!" he said. "We could have a high old time, couldn't we? Fancy St. Jim's being left two or three days without a master!"

"By Jove!" said Tom Merry. "Of course, as junior captain in the School House, I should have to keep order in the Lower School. I should see that you youngsters toed the mark."

"I should like to see you keeping order in my study," Blake remarked.

"It would be my duty, my dear chap."

Blake snorted.

"It would be a painful duty, then."

"Yaas, wathah! I should uttably wefuse to be kept in ordah by a Shell boundah. As leadahs of the juniahs, it would weally be our duty to keep ordah, and we should have to make Tom Mewwy toe the line."

"Rats!" said Tom Merry cheerily.

—TIME OF THEIR LIVES IN THIS LIVELY LONG YARN!

MASTERS!

By
Martin Clifford.

"If you say wats to me, Tom Mewwy—"
"Hallo! What's the trouble?" asked George Figgins, the leader of the New House, strolling up with his hands in his pockets.

"Only Tom Mewwy playin' the giddy ox!"

"Only Gussy giving an asinine performance, as usual!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Put it to Figgins," said Blake. "Suppose there were an accident to the railway, and the masters and prefects all got detained at Southampton, wouldn't it be our bare duty to keep the Shell in their place?"

"Yes, rather!" said Figgins, a Fourth Former, promptly. "And we should do it, too! But there hasn't been any giddy railway accident, has there?"

"Well, no!"

"What blessed Jonah thought of it, then?"

"I wefuse to be called a Jonah, Figgins!"

"Oh, it was your idea, was it?" said Figgins. "Well, in the event of anything of the sort happening, the New House would, of course, assert its position as Cock House of St. Jim's, and we should look after you School House chaps!"

"Wats!"

"And rats to you!"

The chime from the clock-tower interrupted the altercation. Four quarters, and then four heavy strokes.

"Bai Jove! It's four o'clock!"

The juniors stared at one another.

For it was known that the vessel upon which the Head was to leave Southampton sailed at three, and the party that had gone to see him off were expected to catch the next train back to Rylcombe, which would bring them to the school about half-past three.

"Four o'clock!" said Tom Merry.

"My hat!"

"They're late!"

Monty Lowther and Manners of the Shell came down to the gates.

"Seen anything of them, you chaps?" asked Lowther. "It's high time they were back."

"They must have missed the train," said Blake.

"That would only make them a quarter of an hour later if they waited for the next."

"Bai Jove!"

"It's very odd!"

Other fellows were coming down to the gates now. It was certainly very peculiar that the party did not return.

Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, had been very ill, and now that he had gone away it was only a mark of affectionate esteem that the masters should go in a body to see him off. The run to Southampton by express was not a long one, and, under the circumstances, the school could be trusted to keep on its good behaviour. Besides, there were several prefects left to keep order. At the same time, it was very odd that Mr. Railton and the rest should have missed the train back.

Had the Head been taken suddenly worse? Or had there indeed been an accident on the line? Such things might have happened!

A crowd gradually collected at the gates of St. Jim's, and some of the fellows were looking anxious, too. D'Arcy, to his annoyance, found himself looked upon in the light of a Jonah. He had first suggested the idea of a railway accident, and some of the fellows seemed to think, from that, that he was responsible for it.

Five o'clock pealed out from the tower.

The fellows gathered at the school gates were looking quite anxious now.

What had happened?

CHAPTER 2. Startling News!

WHAT had happened?

That was the question that the St. Jim's fellows were asking themselves now. The return of the masters had been delayed an hour and a half. Missing a train would not account for that. There were several trains since that Mr. Railton's party might have taken, and still arrived at St. Jim's before five o'clock.

Something had happened.

"Must have been an accident," said Manners.

"I'm going down to the railway station to inquire," said Tom Merry resolutely. "Blessed if I know what can have happened, but nothing has."

And he walked away to the bicycle shed for his machine. Three or four other fellows followed his example.

"I don't catch on to it at all," Blake remarked, as they were getting the machines out. "If there were an accident, the telegraph wires are still there—why can't they send a wire?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's a giddy mystery," said Herries.

"They'll tell us at the station," said Tom Merry.

Half a dozen juniors went with Tom Merry down the road to Rylcombe, and they soon reached the sleepy railway station there.

The old porter was surprised by a rush of eager juniors in search of information.

"Has there been an accident on the line?" Tom Merry demanded.

"No, Master Merry," said the old man, in surprise. "I ain't 'eard of any accident."

"Have the trains come in as usual?"

"Every one."

"Oh! You see, our masters haven't come back from Southampton," Tom Merry explained. "They were expected back before four o'clock, and now it's nearly half-past five."

"And we're gettin' wathah anxious about them, you know."

The old porter shook his head.

"They ain't come back this way," he said, "and there ain't been an accident on the line. We should have heard of it here."

"My only hat!" said Blake, as they left the station. "What on earth does it mean? Is it that the Head has been taken seriously ill again, and they're staying with him?"

"But they'd wire, and some of them would come back, at least."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors, utterly mystified, returned to St. Jim's. They could make simply nothing of the mystery; it baffled them completely. Every master and the chief prefects of both Houses had gone. St. Jim's was left to its own guidance, and it seemed that the school would remain so for the night.

What could it mean?

An eager crowd met the juniors as they pedalled up to the gates of St. Jim's again. Fellows of all Forms were there to hear the news. Wally D'Arcy—D'Arcy minor of the Third—was the first to sight them.

"Here they are!" he shouted. "What's the news?"

"None!" said Tom Merry, jumping off his bicycle.

"No accident on the line?" asked Lefevre of the Fifth.

"They say not at the station."

"No news at all?"

"No."

"Well, it's jolly odd, that's what I say!" said Lefevre.

"Bai Jove, yaas, wathah!"

"What larks!" said Wally, with a chuckle. "Fancy St. Jim's without a master! My only respected Aunt Jane!"

"I shall insist upon your keeping ordah, Wally!"

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus!"

"Weally—"

"It can't be an accident, or we should have heard," said North of the Sixth. "Somebody would have sent a wire!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then why don't they come?"

"Blessed if I know!"

The mystery bothered all St. Jim's. In both Houses, in every Form, in all the studies and passages, only one thing was now discussed. What had become of the masters? Where were they?

Dusk was falling in the old quad, and a group of fellows were standing at the doorway of the School House, discussing the matter, when a lad in uniform was observed making his way towards the House.

It was the telegraph boy from the village.

"A telegram!" exclaimed Gore.

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"News at last!"
There was a rush to surround the telegraph boy. He had a familiar envelope in his hand.
"Who's it for?" exclaimed Tom Merry.
"For the school!" said the boy.
"What?"
"My hat!"

Sure enough, the envelope was addressed simply to "St. Jim's, Rylcombe." The juniors looked at it as the boy held it up. Evidently some stranger had sent it, and, not knowing whom to address it to, had sent it simply to St. Jim's.
"A prefect ought to open it," said Blake.

"Knox, Knox!"
Knox, the prefect, was coming out of the School House. Fellows made way for him.

"It's a telegram," said Gore.
"Give it to me."
The prefect opened it. He glanced over the strip within, and uttered an exclamation of astonishment.
"Great Scott!"

There was a general shout of inquiry.
"What's happened, Knox?"
"Read it out."

The prefect read out the telegram.
"It's signed Johnson," he said. "Johnson's the name of the keeper of the hotel where the Head and the others were going to dine before they went on the steamer, I believe."

"Yes, I remember," said Baker of the Sixth. "What's he got to say?"

"Here it is: 'Have learned that party accompanying Dr. Holmes did not leave steamer in time, and have sailed with him—Johnson.'"

"Great Scott!"
"Bai Jove!"

"My only aunt!"
Knox lowered the telegram, and gave a whistle.

"My hat!" he said. "They've sailed for Dieppe—all of them—Head, masters, and prefects! The school's left without a master!"

"By Jove!"
"And they won't be back until to-morrow night at the earliest," murmured Gore.

All was clear now.
The party accompanying the Head had naturally gone on the steamer to see him off, and to say good-bye there, and they had been involuntarily carried off to sea.

It was an accident that might easily happen—in fact, that has happened many times. Now it had happened to the masters of St. Jim's.

But what of the school?
For twenty-four hours, at least—perhaps for longer—St. Jim's was left without a master!

It was an unprecedented state of affairs, and it was likely to lead to unprecedented happenings!

CHAPTER 3. Keeping Order!

ST. JIM'S was in a peculiar frame of mind that eventful evening.

The school without a master found itself in an unique position, and the juniors could not get their bearings at first.

In the School House, the larger of the two Houses at St. Jim's, Knox was the only prefect left.

Into Knox's hands, naturally, fell the reins of authority. Had it been Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, or Darrell or Rushden, authority might have been maintained unimpaired.

The respect the fellows felt for Kildare would have helped him in keeping things in order.

But Knox was little regarded. He was a bully and a tyrant, in the first place, and he had only retained his post as prefect by very carefully keeping his real character from the knowledge of the Head.

Knox was likely to regard the present occasion as one for swanking, and that was not the way to keep order among fellows already inclined to be unruly.

Over in the New House matters might be expected to go differently. Baker of the Sixth was prefect there, and Baker was a steady, determined, popular fellow. Besides, Figgins & Co.—Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn—would probably back him up.

In the School House there were likely to be "ructions." For Knox was on the worst of terms with the juniors, especially with their leaders, Tom Merry and Blake, and he had few friends, even in his own Form.

"There will be trouble, I guess," Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth remarked, as he came into Study No. 6. Lumley, who had been known as the "Outsider," had changed for the better, and was now on friendly terms with the decent fellows.

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Blake nodded.
"I imagine so," he said. "Knox isn't the chap to keep order. I have been thinking it over, and I want you chaps to back me up."

Lumley-Lumley looked at him inquiringly.
"You're thinking of a big rag while the masters are away?" he asked.

Blake laughed.
"No, I was thinking of the reverse of that," he said. "I was thinking that we ought to stand together to keep order."

"Yaas, wathah!"
"I guess I'm agreeable to that," said Lumley-Lumley. "I'm with you all the time, and we can make the others toe the line."

"Perhaps you're right," said Herries, after a pause. "We ought to go on just the same as if the masters were here and do our work, I suppose."

"That's the wheeze."
The study door opened, and Reilly of the Fourth looked in. He grinned, and nodded to the chums of the Fourth.

"Faith, and this is a lark!" he exclaimed.
"What's a lark?" demanded Blake with great severity. Reilly started a little.

"Sure, this is—the masters being away, I mean. Are ye going to do your prep to-night, me bhoy?"

"Of course, we are," said Blake, with mock innocence. "I'm surprised at the question, Reilly."

"Wha-a-at!"
"I want it understood in the Fourth," said Blake severely, "that matters aren't going on anyhow because the masters are gone! It's up to us to keep perfect order, and show that we can be trusted alone. You catch on?"

"Faith, I'm not going to do any prep!"
"What?"

"I'm not going to do any prep!"
"You're—not—going—to—do—any—prep?" Blake said, in measured tones, shooting out each word as if it were a pellet from a catapult.

"Faith, no!" said Reilly defiantly. "What's the good of prep, when there's to be no classes in the morning, entirety?"

"It's a question of principle."
"Yaas, wathah!"

"Rats!"
"My hat!" exclaimed Blake. "We'll jolly soon see whether you're not going to do your prep!"

"The fellows are all saying the same," said Reilly, with a grin. "They're talking it over in the Common-room, and I came to see what you thought, entirety. Sure and it's not a stroke of wurrk I'm going to do."

"It's a mattah of pwinciple, deah boy."
"Rats!"

"Weally, Weally——"
"This is a case for an example," said Blake. "Collar the bouncer!"

"Faith, I——"
"Collar him!"

Reilly retreated into the passage in alarm, but he was collared in the doorway. Blake and Herries and D'Arcy and Lumley-Lumley all obtained a hold upon him somewhere, and there was really no chance for Reilly.

"Ow!" he roared. "Help! Ow!"
"Bump him!"

"Yaas, wathah! Give him the fwog's-march, deah boys, into the Common-room, as a warnin' to othahs."

"Good egg!"
"I—oh—you—yow—ow—wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The four juniors rushed their prisoner along the passage and down the stairs. Reilly struggled and kicked furiously all the same, and they all had their work cut out to hold him. The boy from Belfast was a powerful junior, and he was a tough handful even for four fellows. But he was got downstairs and rushed along to the Common-room.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Tom Merry, who, with Lowther and Manners, met them in the passage. "What's the row?"

"We're keeping order!" gasped Blake.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you Shell chumps?"
"Ha, ha, ha! If that's the way you keep order, you'd better have a riot instead! It would be quieter."

"Yaas, wathah!"
"Ow! Rescue!" roared Reilly. "Yah! Faith, and I'll—ow—wow—wow!"

"Get the door opened!" gasped Blake.
Herries lunged the Common-room door open. A crowd of juniors were inside, all talking at once. They all looked round at the strange sight of Reilly being rushed into the room.

"My hat!" exclaimed Hancock. "What the dickens——"
"Faith, rescue!" roared Reilly. "Ow!"

"Bump!"
"What are you doing to Reilly?" shouted Macdonald.



One after another, four figures were hurled from the Common-room, to land with heavy bumps in the passage. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "It's Tom Merry & Co.! This is how they keep law and order in the Lower Forms!"

"Bumping him!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Yow! Rescue!"
 Bump!

And with the last bump, Reilly was left sitting on the floor of the Common-room gasping for breath.

CHAPTER 4. Thrown Out!

THE juniors gathered round in great excitement. The Shell fellows in the Junior Common-room looked on and laughed. But the Fourth Formers were really interested. They knew why Reilly had gone to Blake's study, and from the manner of his return to the Common-room they could guess what attitude Blake & Co. were taking in the matter.

Reilly gasped for breath, and panted and gasped. His rapid march from the Fourth Form passage to the Common-room had quite winded him, and the bumping put a finishing touch.

"Look here, what does this mean?" Mellish exclaimed.

"It means that we're going to keep order," said Blake. "We'll have peace in this House, if we have to fight every chap in the place for it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah! We mean bisney, deah boys."

"Faith," gasped Reilly, "and sure they say we're all to do the prep all the same, and sure I won't do a stroke entirety."

"Not much!" said Mellish emphatically.

"No fear!" said Snipe.

"While the cat's away the mice will play, you know," Kerruish remarked. "No blessed prep for me."

"And no lessons in the morning, either."

"Not much!"

Blake sniffed.

"We marched Reilly back here as a lesson and a warning to others!" he exclaimed. "We mean bisney."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We're going to keep order in the Fourth—in the School House part of the Form, at any rate, while the masters are away."

"Bai Jove, yaas!"

"We're jolly well not going to do any prep to-night, anyway," snapped Kerruish.

"You are!"

"We're not!"

"We've started on Reilly," said Blake. "We don't mind bumping the whole Form, if necessary."

"Bai Jove, I'm quite weady to bump the whole Form, if you'll wait for me to change my clobber, deah boys."

Reilly staggered to his feet. He was still breathless, and he was very red and very wrathful.

"So they—they've bumped me as warning to the Form?" he gasped. "Come on, then—let's bump them as a warning to themselves!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Collar them!"

"Hands off!" roared Blake. "I—oh—hands off!"

Blake hit out as the juniors rushed upon him. But he was overwhelmed by numbers. Lumley-Lumley and Herries and D'Arcy lined up with him, but a rush of twenty fellows swept them off their feet.

The four keepers of law and order went rolling on the floor of the Common-room, and over them rolled and sprawled a crowd of excited, yelling juniors.

"Faith, we've got them!"

"Sit on their heads!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bump them!"

The four juniors struggled furiously in the grasp of the Fourth Formers.

But they struggled in vain. The odds against them were too heavy.

They were rolled, and rumpled, and bumped, and finally hurled forth from the Common-room into the passage.

A roar of laughter followed them. Shell fellows and

Third Form fags joined in. Truly, the aspect of Blake & Co. was not imposing.

They sat up in the passage, dusty, gasping, breathless, and perspiring. The juniors crammed the doorway of the Common-room and jeered.

"Go home!"

"Faith, have ye had enough?"

"Go and do your prep!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake staggered to his feet. He was furious.

"Come on!" he roared. And he charged back at the crowded doorway.

Herries, Lumley-Lumley, and D'Arcy were after him in a second. The four of them hurled themselves upon the grinning crowd jammed in the doorway of the Common-room.

But they could not get through.

They were hurled back, gasping and panting, to fall in a heap on the linoleum in the passage.

Blake was the first down, and D'Arcy rolled upon him. Lumley-Lumley and Herries were dropped across them.

There was a fresh roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Haven't ye had enough yet, ye spalpeens?"

"Crawl away!"

The last piece of advice was too good not to be taken. Blake & Co. crawled away. They could do nothing else.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther met them at the foot of the stairs. The Terrible Three burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where have you been?" gasped Monty Lowther. "Wrestling with a motor-car, or arguing with a lawn-mower?"

"Ow!"

"Bai Jove!"

"They've been keeping order in the Fourth," grinned Tom Merry.

And Manners and Lowther yelled.

Blake held on to the banisters and gasped. His jacket was split up the back, his collar was torn out, his nose was crimson, and his hair a tousled mass.

He certainly did look as if he had been in trouble.

"You silly chumps!" he gasped. "We've been keeping the youngsters in order, only—only—"

"They won't be kept," said Herries.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you think you can manage it, you'd better go and try your hand," roared Blake.

"Oh, we're going to keep order all right!" said Tom Merry. "We regard it as our duty."

"Yes, rather!" said Monty Lowther. "Our bounden duty."

"Go it—then! You'll get jolly well bumped."

The Shell fellows laughed and walked away to the Common-room. Blake leaned against the banisters, breathing hard.

"Hold on!" he said. "Let's watch! I want to see how those Shell duffers are going to keep order!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the dusty quartet listened. They saw the Terrible Three enter the Junior Common-room, and they heard the sound of rising voices. Loud and long were the remarks, in a rising crescendo of excitement.

The sound of violent scuffling followed.

Blake chuckled.

"They're getting down to bisney," he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes! Look!"

"Bai Jove! Here they come!"

A dusty form came hurtling through the doorway of the Common-room, to fall with a bump on the linoleum in the passage.

"Ha, ha, ha! It's Lowther!" roared Blake.

Lowther lay gasping.

There was a struggle in the doorway, and another form came sprawling out.

"Manners!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Here's another!"

"Tom Merry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry fell in a heap across Manners. Yet a fourth body came whirling through the doorway—Kangaroo of the Shell, who had doubtless chipped in to help the Terrible Three. He tumbled along, and fell with his arms outspread, catching Monty Lowther in an involuntary embrace, and crushing him down to the floor again.

Then the door was slammed after them.

Tom Merry & Co. staggered up and gasped for breath. It was the turn of Blake and his chums to laugh—and they did!

They roared.

CHAPTER 5.

Knocks at Knox!

KEEPING order in the Lower Forms was an easy thing to talk about; but it was apparently a harder thing to do.

Perhaps the chums of the School House had been a little "previous" in taking charge of the matter at all. Their intentions were first-rate. But the other fellows might be excused for wanting to know what business it was of theirs, anyhow.

That aspect of the case did not appear to have occurred to the Terrible Three, or to Blake & Co. But what had occurred to them very forcibly was, that the Lower Forms, in the School House at least, did not want to be kept in order, and did not mean to be kept in order.

The school was without a master, and the mere thought of that was enough to set the youthful blood running riot in many veins.

The Head was gone, the masters were gone, even the prefects were gone—the boys were left to their own devices for twenty-four hours, at least.

The excitement grew and grew.

The fellows could not settle down to anything, least of all to prep. Work was tabooed by common consent.

Even Tom Merry & Co., virtuously determined as they had been to keep the other fellows up to the mark, somehow forgot to do their own prep.

As for Knox, he was not likely to be able to keep order. The School House prefect was not only extremely unpopular, but he had no nerve in dealing with anything in the nature of a crisis. The probability was that Knox would swank and swank until he met with some resistance, and then climb down suddenly.

Later in the evening Knox looked into the Junior Common-room.

There was a bullying expression on his face, which showed that the knowledge that he was in sole authority in the School House had "got into his head," as Monty Lowther put it.

There was a great deal of talk going on in the room, and certainly more noise than usual; but if Knox had been a little tactful, he would have taken no notice of that. It was not a time to take special notice of small matters.

But Knox had little tact.

"Not so much noise here!" he snarled.

Every eye was turned upon the prefect at once. The



FISHY'S FEARFUL FIX!

A queer guy is Fisher T. Fish, the junior who hails from "Noo Yark." Ever since he joined the Remove Form at Greyfriars his one and only hobby has been making money. His business transactions have landed him in many a scrape, too! But never has Fishy been landed in so fearful a scrape as he finds himself this week. If you want a feast of fun and thrills, read the extra special book-length story of Harry Wharton & Co., the schoolboy rebels, in this week's issue of

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juniors stared at him as if he were some curious animal that had wandered into their quarters.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Jack Blake—Blake and the rest were in the Common-room now, and not keeping order. The idea appeared to have been dropped, and, by common consent, nothing was said about the ejections from the Common-room a couple of hours earlier.

"Hallo, here's Knox!"

"Not so much noise!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Mind, I don't want any cheek from you rats!" said Knox. "I'll give you a hundred lines each to write out before you go to bed if I have any of your nonsense."

"My word!" murmured Monty Lowther. "I can see myself writing them out, too—I don't think!"

"What-ho!" said Manners.

"I guess not!" Lumley-Lumley remarked.

Knox stamped his foot angrily.

"Who Knox?" asked Monty Lowther.

There was a laugh, and the prefect turned crimson.

"Lowther! Take a hundred lines!"

"Certainly!" said Lowther. "Where shall I take them?"

"Take two hundred lines!"

"With pleasure! Where—"

"If you say another word, Lowther, I shall cane you!"

"Will you really?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox gritted his teeth.

"Come here, Lowther!" he shouted.

Lowther did not stir.

"Thank you—I prefer remaining where I am," he remarked.

"Come here!"

"Neither time, old man."

"Lowther, I order you—"

"Dear me!" said Lowther. "He orders me, Tommy!"

"Dear me!" said Tom Merry. "He orders you, Lowther!"

"Dear me!" said Manners. "Chaps, he orders him!"

"Bai Jove! He orders him, you know!"

"My aunt!" said Blake. "He orders him!"

"Orders him, you know!" said Kangaroo.

Knox simply fumed. It was the beginning of a "rag," and he knew it. The juniors were openly mocking him, and as he had started the trouble, he had no right to complain.

He made a rush across the room to Monty Lowther. The Shell fellow retreated round the big table, which was too large and solid for Knox to shift it out of the way.

From the opposite side of it, Monty smiled across at the prefect. Lowther rather prided himself upon a characteristic calm of manner, and certainly he did not look nearly so excited as the Sixth Former.

"Come back here, Lowther!" roared Knox.

"Thanks! I'm all right here!"

"I order you—as a prefect!"

"And I decline—as a sensible chap."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox glared round at the laughing juniors. But that did not prevent them from laughing. They roared! The red and furious face of Knox seemed to amuse them. The prefect clenched his hands, as if he would rush upon them, hitting out right and left. But he thought better of it. Some of the fellows looked as if they wanted an excuse for handling him: and he had too much sense to afford them one.

Knox clenched his hands, and made a sudden run round the table. Monty Lowther fled, and round and round the table they went twice, the Shell fellow easily keeping his distance ahead of the senior.

Knox paused, partly from breathlessness, and partly because the wild yells of laughter made him realise what a ridiculous figure he was cutting.

He panted at Lowther across the table.

"You young villain—"

"I love him for his nice manners," murmured Monty Lowther, flicking a speck of dust from his sleeve, in a calm, negligent way.

"I—I—"

"Go hon!"

"I'll smash you!"

"Dear me! He's going to smash me, you chaps!"

"He's going to smash him!"

"Bai Jove! Smash him, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox laid his hands upon the table, and made a sudden sprawl across it. He intended to take Lowther by surprise, and catch him before he could escape. But Lowther was watching him. He had not time to run round the table, but he dived under it, and came up on the other side just as Knox came sprawling across.

Knox rolled off on to the floor, and stood where Lowther had been standing, gasping. But the table was still between them.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared.

"I—I—I—" gasped Knox. "Lowther, I—I shall report this to Mr. Railton immediately he returns."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I shall—shall—"

Words failed Knox. He made another wild rush round the table. Again Lowther eluded him. Then the angry prefect strode from the room, followed by roars of laughter from the juniors.

The last person in authority left in the School House had had his first passage of arms with the juniors, and he had been worsted. It was not a good augury for the orderliness of the School House during the absence of the masters!

CHAPTER 8.

Knox Begs Pardon!

"BED-TIME!" yawned Tom Merry, looking at the clock.

Manners yawned.

"Well, we've had an exciting evening, and I'm tired," he remarked.

"Blessed if I'm going to bed!" said Gore.

"Why not?"

"What's the good of going to bed if you don't have to?" Tom Merry laughed.

SLOW.



Passenger (to driver of slow train): "I say, I think I'll get down and pick some flowers on the embankment."

Driver: "But there aren't any flowers to pick."

Passenger: "That's all right—I've got some seeds!"

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"What's the good of stopping up if you don't want to?" he asked, in turn.

"Well, I do want to," said Gore. "And I'm going to, too!"

"Same here!" yawned Snipe. "We're jolly well not going to bed. This is Liberty Hall at present, and we're not going to bed."

"Besides, it's the prefect's duty to see that we do," Mellish remarked. "No reason why we should relieve Knox of his duties, as far as I can see. Let him come and make us go to bed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess that's a good idea," said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

No one, in fact, wanted to go to bed. Those who were sleepy felt tempted by the unusual luxury of staying up late. It gave the juniors a singular sense of freedom and importance to sit and calmly watch the hand of the clock pass half past nine, without making a stir.

"Quarter to ten," said Blake, with a yawn.

"Bai Jove! Who says bed?"

"Oh, blow bed!"

"Rats!"

"Knox hasn't been to remind us," grinned Kangaroo.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's not likely to come!" grinned Herries.

But Herries was wrong in that. Knox put his head in at the door a few minutes later. He assumed a determined and authoritative air, but the shiftiness of his eyes betrayed how uncertain he felt about being obeyed.

"Bed-time!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, rats!" said Gore.

Knox pretended not to hear.

"Now be off to bed!" he exclaimed.

Whether the juniors would have obeyed or not is a question, had not Tom Merry set the example. Tom Merry rose from his seat and walked towards the door, and Manners and Lowther followed him at once, Blake & Co. joined them, and then the rest of the juniors followed.

Tom Merry having taken the lead, the whole of the Shell and the Fourth went up to their dormitories quietly.

Gore grunted discontentedly as he went into the Shell dormitory.

"Might have stayed up till midnight if we'd liked!" he exclaimed. "Knox hasn't the nerve to send us to bed if we don't choose to go."

"What's the good of staying up yawning our heads off?" said Tom Merry, with a laugh.

"Well, it would show our giddy independence."
 "Better get a beauty sleep."
 "Yes, rather; we can be independent in the morning," said Manners, with a grin.
 "Knox has been taken down a peg or two already," said Gore. "He—Ow! Oh!"

Gore broke off suddenly. Knox had quietly entered the dormitory, and Gore had not heard him. The prefect interrupted Gore with a violent box on the ears, which sent him staggering half a dozen paces, till he fell heavily against a bed and rolled on the dormitory floor.

"Ow!" gasped Gore.
 There was a shout of anger from the Shell fellows.
 "Shame!"
 "Cad!"
 "Brute!"

Knox glared round upon them.
 "I'll give some more of you the same if there's any cheek here!" he said. "I've had enough of your impudence, you young sweeps!"

Gore sat up on the floor. He was looking dazed and bewildered; his senses were swimming from the brutal blow. Tom Merry strode towards the prefect.

"You coward!" he shouted. "To hit a chap like that!"
 "Merry—"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"
 Knox did not reply. He ran straight at Tom Merry.
 The hero of the Shell did not budge. Knox was nearly twice as big as he was, but if he had been three times as big Tom Merry would have stood his ground all the same.

He got in one heavy right-hander as Knox closed upon him, and the bully of the Sixth staggered for a second. Then his powerful grasp closed upon the hero of the Shell.

Tom Merry was swung off his feet.
 It might have gone hard with Tom just then, but the other Shell fellows were by no means disposed to leave him at the mercy of the prefect.

"Rescue!" shouted Kangaroo.
 And the Shell rushed to the rescue.
 A dozen pair of hands grasped Knox, and he was whirled away from his victim. Tom Merry staggered free, gasping for breath.

Knox struggled in the hands of the juniors.
 "Let me go!" he shrieked. "Let me go!"
 "Rats!"
 "Hold him!"
 "Roll him over!"

Two or three fellows helped Gore up and sat him upon a bed. Gore was not a popular fellow, but Knox had gone altogether too far. Boxing ears, too, was strictly forbidden at St. Jim's, because of the injury it might cause to the eardrum. Gore was looking quite dazed and stupefied, and there was no doubt that Knox deserved punishment.

"Hold him!" said Tom Merry. "He's going through it for this!"

"You bet!"
 "You young hounds!" gasped Knox. "Remember I'm a prefect! You'll be called to account for it if you dare to lay hands on me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "He's going to beg Gore's pardon on his giddy knees," said Tom Merry determinedly.

There was a yell of approval from the excited juniors.
 "Good egg!"
 "Bravo!"

"To your knees!"
 Knox struggled furiously in the grip of the Shell fellows. His face was crimson with rage. He was dragged down on his knees and held there in spite of his fierce resistance.

"I won't!" he roared.
 "Your mistake!" grinned Clifton Dane. "You will!"
 "I—I—I'll report all this to the Head."

"You will have some more to report, too, if you don't beg Gore's pardon!" said Tom Merry. "Are you going to do it?"

"No!" roared Knox.
 "Get a cake of soap, Glyn!"
 "Here you are!" grinned Bernard Glyn.
 "Open your mouth, Knox!"
 "I won't!"

"Prise it open with a cricket stump," Kangaroo suggested.
 "Good!"

Knox opened his mouth hurriedly as the spiked end of a cricket stump approached his jaws. The cake of soap was jammed in, and Knox spluttered and spluttered.

"Now, then," said Tom Merry grimly, "you'll beg Gore's pardon, you brute, or you'll eat that soap to the last atom!"
 "Choo!"

"Will you tell Gore you're sorry?"

"Grooch!"

"Yes or no?"

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"N-yes! Ow! Groooooch! I'm sorry!" snorted Knox.

"Awfully sorry?"

"Grooch! Yes!"

"Take the soap away, then."

The soap was jerked away, leaving Knox spluttering lather. Tom Merry pointed to the door of the dormitory.
 "Now chuck him out!" he snapped.

"I—I—I'll walk out!" exclaimed Knox.

His tone was almost suppliant. All the bravado was gone now from the manner of the bully of the Sixth.

"Well," said Tom Merry considerably, "you can walk out if you like, but buck up. Let him go, you chaps. I give you two seconds, Knox!"

Knox did not need them. In one second he was outside the Shell dormitory, and the door was slammed behind him.

CHAPTER 7.

Late Risers!

IT was quite late before the Shell turned in. In the Fourth Form dormitory bed-time was nearer half-past eleven than half-past nine. The fellows played leap-frog in the dormitory, and chased one another round and over the beds. But before midnight they were tired out, so they turned in.

They slept soundly enough, naturally, after their unusual exertions and late hours. Few of them woke when the rising-bell sounded in the morning.

Clang, clang, clang!

Taggles evidently was at his post at the usual time, in spite of the absence of the Head and all the masters.

Clang, clang, clang!

Tom Merry sat up in bed, yawned, and rubbed his sleepy eyes.

"Hallo, you fellows! Time!"

Snore!

"Lowther, old man, time to get up."

"Groogh!"

"Manners! I say, Manners!"

"Groogh!"

"Oh, shut up, Merry!" came a sleepy voice from Gore's bed. "What's the good of getting up? I want to snooze!"

"Same here!" mumbled Manners.

"Oh, get up!" said Tom Merry. "Don't be a slacker!"

"Yah!"

"You seem to forget we agreed to keep to the rules!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Groogh!"

"Do you hear me, Lowther?"

Snore!

"Now, look here, you chaps," said Tom Merry, still without getting out of bed, however, "this won't do—it really won't!"

"Yaw-aw!"

"You see," went on Tom Merry, settling down in bed again and arranging his head comfortably upon his pillow while he spoke—"you see, it's our duty to set an example and—yaw—and to—to—in fact—yaw—get up!"

"Groo!"

Snore!

"Berrergerrup!" murmured Tom Merry, dropping off to sleep again. "Berragerrup, you know!"

And he slumbered.

Silence reigned in the still, morning air—and so did slumber.

It was not till nine o'clock that Tom Merry opened his eyes again. Then he woke up with a start.

He sat up in bed and blinked round the dormitory. The bright morning sun was streaming in at the high windows. It smote dazzlingly upon his eyes.

"My hat!" murmured Tom Merry. "What on earth's the time?"

He groped for his watch and looked at it. Then he started.

He jumped out of bed.

His head was heavy, for he was accustomed to perfectly regular hours of sleeping and waking—a fact to which, more than anything else, he owed his perfect physical fitness. He was feeling very unusually seedy this morning.

"Wake up!" he shouted.

Some of the fellows were already awake, and were stretching themselves, too lazy to get up, though they did not want to sleep.

"Hallo!" yawned Gore. "You getting up?"

"It's nearly nine."

"Well, suppose it is!"

"Get up!"

"Oh, go and eat coke! There are no lessons this morning," said Crooke. "I don't see why we shouldn't stay in bed all day, if we want to."

"Hear, hear!" put in Gore.

"Rats! Don't be such rotten slackers!" said Tom Merry disdainfully. "Lowther—Manners! Turn out, you lazy fatheads!"

"All right!" grumbled Lowther. "Keep your hair on!" Lowther and Manners turned out. Kangaroo and Clifton Dane and Bernard Glyn followed. Some of the other fellows remained in bed.

Tom Merry took his sponge and soaked it in water at his washstand.

"Anybody want helping out?" he asked.

"Look here, mind your own business, Tom Merry!" exclaimed Crooke, with a snarl. "I'm not going to get up till ten o'clock."

"You'll have a headache if you stay in bed so late," said Tom Merry severely, "and it causes bad indigestion, too."

"I don't care!"

"My dear chap, I can't stand by and see you expose yourself to such sufferings, merely from a little slacking."

"Lemme alone!"

"I'm going to save you from yourself!"

to go for Tom Merry with his fists, but he thought better of it, and turned sulkily to his clothes.

"Any more help required?" asked Tom Merry cheerfully. Apparently no more help was required. The other Shell fellows turned out like lambs, and all of them started washing and dressing.

Nine o'clock struck just before they left the dormitory.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I believe those lazy bounders in the Fourth haven't stirred yet!"

"Oh, shocking!" exclaimed Lowther.

"Disgraceful!"

"Rotten!"

"No class!"

Tom Merry threw open the Fourth Form dormitory.

True enough the Fourth were not up yet.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was sitting up in bed, rubbing his eyes, but the rest of the Fourth Formers were still in horizontal attitudes.



"Collar him!" said Tom Merry. As the juniors pounced on Knox, the prefect struggled and fought like a wild cat. But the odds were too heavy. Knox was grasped in many hands, whirled off the bed, and bumped on the floor. The juniors had a short way with a fellow who wouldn't get up!

"Keep off!" roared Crooke, as Tom Merry approached his bed with the dripping sponge in his hand.

"Time to get up!"

"Mind your own bisney! Ow! Ooooh!"

Crooke roared as the sponge was squeezed over his face. Cold water drenched his face and head and ran down over his chest, and the cad of the Shell rolled out of bed in a twinkling.

"You beast!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anybody else want helping?" asked Tom Merry, looking round blandly.

"Look here," said Gore, "I'm jolly well not going to get up yet! I'm tired, and I'm going to do as I like! If you bring that blessed sponge near me I'll land out with my foot, so I warn you."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Up you get!" he replied.

He advanced upon Gore. Gore put his leg out of bed and lunged at Tom's chest with his foot. The hero of the Shell caught his ankle with his left hand, and with his right squeezed the sponge along the bared leg.

There was a wild yell from Gore.

"Ger-r-r-oooh! Yow! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Up you get!"

Gore rolled out of bed. He looked inclined for a moment

Tom Merry looked in wrathfully.

"Well, if this doesn't take the cake!" he exclaimed. "What do you youngsters mean by this, I'd like to know?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Wake them up, you chaps!"

"What-ho!"

Although the Shell had not been very enthusiastic about getting up themselves, they were very indignant at this shocking example of slacking on the part of the Fourth. With one accord they rushed into the dormitory to wake the Fourth Formers.

CHAPTER 8.

Waking up the Fourth!

"GERRUP!"

"Turn out!"

"Slackers!"

"Up you get!"

And the Shell fellows, while they thus adjured the Fourth, added actions to words. They dragged bedclothes off the beds, they spanked bare limbs with ringing, echoing spans, and they pushed and rolled the fellows on to the floor.

There was no doubt at all that the Fourth were thoroughly awakened. An earthquake could not have done it more effectually.

There were wild yells of wrath and protest. The Fourth showed fight up and down the dormitory. But unclothed fellows taken by surprise had little chance. They were rolled out and bumped and spanked, the Shell roaring with laughter all the time.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he sat on the floor. "Bai Jove! Hands off, you wottahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All awake?" asked Tom Merry blandly.

"Yah!"

"Cads!"

"Beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha! We've finished here! Let's go and see if the other chaps are getting up."

"Good idea!"

And the Shell fellows retreated to the door.

But the Fourth Formers having been so effectually awakened, were not disposed to allow them to depart so easily. Blake collared a bolster and rushed to the attack.

"Go for them!" he roared.

"Yaas, wathah! Sock it to them, deah boys!"

"Down with the Shell!"

The Shell fellows had to turn and fight. The Fourth Formers, with pillows and bolsters, swept down upon them furiously.

"Line up!" shouted Tom Merry.

There was a wild and whirling conflict, and the pillows and bolsters did great execution. The Shell fellows retreated into the passage, where the Fourth Formers were not in a sufficient state of clothing to follow them. They crammed the doorway and yelled after the retreating juniors.

"Yah!"

"Yaas, wathah! Yah, deah boys!"

"Never mind, we've woken you up!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

And the Shell fellows strolled downstairs, leaving the Fourth to dress themselves.

Downstairs, the school presented an unusual aspect.

Even the Sixth Formers had availed themselves of their unusual freedom to stay in bed. A few of the seniors could be seen in the quadrangle, but only a few. And those who were up had evidently not considered it their duty to interfere with the new liberties of the juniors.

Tom Merry looked out into the sunny quad.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "Fancy sticking in bed on a sunny morning! Might have been playing cricket as there are no lessons."

"I suppose there aren't any lessons without any masters?" grinned Lowther. "Knox can't take the classes, anyway—not all of them."

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"This is what I call a good day!" said Manners. "I shall take my camera out."

"We ought to get up a cricket match," said Kangaroo.

"We jolly well ought to get some breakfast!" said Tom Merry. "I'm hungry. By the way, I don't see any New House chaps out of doors."

"I expect Figgins & Co. aren't up yet," said Glyn, looking across the sunny quad to the New House, beyond the elms.

"Lazy slackers!"

"Yes, rather! If they're not up after brekker we'd better go and rouse them out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But breakfast was not ready. The kitchen department was not disorganised by the absence of the masters, as Mrs. Mimms, the House dame, was still at home, but, not knowing when the juniors would come down, Mrs. Mimms did not have breakfast ready. Tom Merry & Co. visited the House dame's room and thundered at the door.

"Mrs. Mimms—Mrs. Mimms!"

"Deary me! Come in! What ever is the matter?" exclaimed the House dame, as the door opened and a crowd of juniors appeared.

"Please, we're hungry!" said Tom Merry.

Mrs. Mimms smiled.

"I will order breakfast at once," she said. "You were not down as usual, and I did not know when you would be coming down. But I will order it at once."

"Thanks, Mrs. Mimms!" said Tom Merry good-humouredly. "Isn't Knox down yet?"

"Master Knox? Oh, no!"

"Knox not down!" exclaimed Lowther. "My word! The prefect in charge of the House—chap who was swanking about last night—too lazy to get up—eh?"

"Did you call him, Mrs. Mimms?"

"Yes, and he said I might go and boil my head!" said the House dame indignantly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The beast!" said Monty Lowther. "Very rotten! Don't do anything of the sort, Mrs. Mimms."

"Really, Master Lowther—"

"Let's go and see Knox while they're getting brekker," said Tom Merry. "I'm shocked and disgusted at his conduct."

"Yes, rather!"

"Here they are!" roared Blake's voice.

And a crowd of Fourth Formers came tearing up, looking very warlike. Tom Merry held up his hand in a sign of peace.

"Pax!" he exclaimed.

"That's all very well!" said Blake wrathfully. "We're going to wallop you for your cheek!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"There's duty to be done," said Tom Merry slowly.

"Ass! What do you mean?"

"I mean that Knox—"

Tom Merry's manner was so grave and deadly serious that the Fourth Formers imagined for a moment that something serious had occurred.

"I hardly like to tell you," said Tom Merry.

"Why, what is it?"

"Bai Jove! Is it an accident, deah boy?"

"I hope nothing's happened to Knox," said Reilly. "Faith, he's a baste entirely, but I hope nothing's happened."

"What is it, Tom Merry?"

"It will shock you fearfully," said Tom Merry with owl-like gravity.

"Get it over, for goodness' sake!"

"Well, then," said the captain of the Shell slowly and solemnly, "Knox—" He paused.

"Yes?" said Blake nervously.

"Well, Knox has—has—has—"

"Yes, yes!"

"Has—hasn't got up yet!" concluded Tom Merry.

"Eh?"

"He hasn't got up yet."

"You—you utter ass!" snorted Blake. "Is that what you were making that fuss about?"

The Shell fellows burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, you know, the cheeky ass was pulling our legs, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake glared—and then he grinned.

"Oh, all right!" he exclaimed. "If he hasn't got up, we'll wake him. Come on!"

And the Shell and the Fourth crowded away with great unanimity towards Knox's room to wake him up.

CHAPTER 9.

Ups and Downs for Knox!

KNOX was still in bed, though it was now half-past nine. Knox was not an early riser when he could help it. It was his habit on ordinary mornings to stay in bed till the last possible moment, and then bundle on his clothes, give his face a rub that did duty for a wash, and run downstairs just in time for breakfast. Naturally, now that he was temporarily in the position of head of St. Jim's, Knox allowed himself greater relaxation. He had stayed up late the previous evening, playing cards and smoking cigarettes with a choice selection of spirits

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after his own kind. He had awakened in the morning with a headache when Mrs. Mimms called him. Now he had fallen asleep again.

Tom Merry tapped gently at his door.

Knox snored on.

"Bai Jove! Kick the door, deah boy!"

Bang!

Tom Merry kicked the door, and Knox started out of his sleep.

"Wh-wh-what's that?" he gasped

"Knox!"

"Eh?"

"It's half-past nine!"

"Who's there?"

"Merry of the Shell."

"Go away!"

"It's time to rise, my son!"

"Go away!" roared Knox.

"Are you getting up?"

"No! Mind your own business! Go away!"

Tom Merry opened the door and looked in. Knox had risen on his elbow in bed, and his face was flushed and his eyes were dull. He had a heavy head that morning, and a very unpleasant taste in his mouth, and his temper was savage. He glared at Tom Merry like a particularly savage rat.

"Can't be did!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

Knox sat up in bed. He huddled the clothes round him, and glared at Tom Merry and the grinning juniors crowding in the doorway.

"You see, we can't have these lazy habits in the Sixth," said Tom Merry seriously. "You know that the Sixth Form is the giddy palladium of a Public school, and you're setting up a fearfully bad example."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Buck up, Knox!"

The prefect glared. He was in a towering rage, and he looked as if he could have massacred all the juniors at one fell swoop with keen enjoyment.

"Get out of my room!" he roared.

"Are you going to get up?"

"You—you cheeky young hound!" bellowed Knox. "Get out! Get out of my room!"

"We uttably wufuse to get out, Knox, until we have weceived some assuwanee that you are goin' to stop this disgustin' slackin'."

"Hear, hear!"

"In the cires, Knox," pursued the swell of St. Jim's, "I must say that I wegard you as a wottah. I am sure I am pwepared to wespect a pwefect. I should wegard it as doocid bad form to tweat anyone in authority with dis-wespect, but you are not playin' the game, Knox. You are not settin' us a good example. I insist upon your settin' us a good example. It is your duty. I wegard it as simply impewative for a fellow to do his beastlay duty, you know!"

"Good old Gussy!"

Knox seemed to be gathering himself for a spring like a tiger. It was pretty certain that there was no more sleep for him, in any case. He glanced round the room, as if in search of a weapon. His hand groped behind him and grasped a pillow.

Arthur Augustus wagged an admonishing forefinger at the senior.

"In the cires, Knox, you had bettah get up," he said. "I wegard it as impewative. And, in any case, we wufuse to leave you in bed. I wegard this slackin' as disgustin'!"

"Yes, rather!"

"You hear, Knox?"

Whiz!

Knox's arm shot forward, and the pillow whizzed from his hands and caught Arthur Augustus fairly upon his aristocratic visage before he could dodge.

Biff!

"Yawwooh!"

D'Arcy staggered back, and sat down upon the floor.

"Ow! Ow!"

The juniors yelled.

"Well bowled! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Owl I—I—"

"Now get out of my room!" roared Knox, grasping the bolster. "Do you hear? Get out of my room before I get up and go for you!"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Sorry, Knox, but we've got our duty to do."

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, scrambling up. "It's a question of duty, you know."

"Are you going to get up?"

"No! Hang you all! No!" fumed Knox.

"Bear a hand, then," said Tom Merry.

The grinning juniors grasped the bedclothes and dragged

(Continued on the next page.)



Do you know a good joke? If so, send it to "THE GEM JESTER," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.). Half-a-crown is awarded to the sender of every joke that appears in this column.

A GRAND SIGHT.

The officer was showing the dear old lady the sights around the barracks. Although she hardly understood what he was talking about, she did her best.

"This," said the officer, "is our polo field."

"Ah, yes," said the old lady. "One has yet to see a better scene in summer than a field of waving polo!" Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Whitton, 6, Kilgour Avenue, Pathhead, Kirkcaldy, Fife, Scotland.

NO INFORMATION.

Jinks: "Did the cyclone damage your house much?"

Binks: "I don't know. I haven't found my house yet!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Jack Bingham, 24, Babba-combe Avenue, Blackpool, Lancs.

STEP ON IT!

Examiner (to young man who hopes to become an engine-driver): "You are going down a steep hill. The brake is broken. What would you do?"

Young Man: "Use emergency brake."

Examiner: "It won't act."

Young Man: "Shut off the steam."

Examiner: "The wheels won't grip."

Young Man: "Pour sand on rails."

Examiner: "Sand is wet, won't pour."

Young Man: "Let 'er rip. We've reached the level now!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Greig, 22, Tees Street, Oamaru, New Zealand.

TRUE ECONOMY.

Englishman: "When I went bald I spent a fortune on hair restorer."

Scotsman: "When I went bald I sold my brush and comb."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to S. Griffiths, 2, Wright Street, Woodstock, Cape Town, South Africa.

LITTLE HE WANTS.

Lady (to tramp): "You look, my man, as if you hadn't taken a bath for years."

Tramp: "Well, ma'am, I thought as 'ow I'd take a few smaller things for a beginning, 'cos I'm not too ambitious."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss Irene Hayes, 21, Ascot Terrace, O'Connell Avenue, Limerick, Ireland.

FISHY!

Old Salt: "What, fish again for breakfast!"

Young Salt: "Well, you've heard, Jack, that fish makes brain?"

Old Salt: "Well, if that's the case, lad, you will need a whale!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Len Hobbs, 5, Mostyn Avenue, Heswall, Cheshire.

A DUST UP.

Mistress: "This place is getting very dirty again."

Maid: "Right-o! I'll get the vacuum cleaner people to give us another demonstration!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Morrish, 47, Edward Street, Shepparton, Victoria, Australia.

HIS JOB.

Father: "Well, my boy, what are you going to be when you grow up?"

Small Son: "I'm going to drive a water cart."

Father: "Drive a water cart! Why do you want to do that?"

Small Son: "So that I won't have to work on wet days!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Harold Ormond Cox, Box 112, Gisborne, New Zealand. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,381.

them off the bed. Knox clutched at them, but the force was too great, and he had to let go the bedclothes or be dragged off with them. He let go, and sat on the bed in his pyjamas, crimson with rage.

"Getting up now, Knoxy?"

"No!" roared Knox.

"Collar him!"

The prefect hit out savagely, and kicked with both feet, struggling and fighting like a wild cat as the juniors pounced upon him.

Some of the assailants received hard knocks, and there were loud howls of pain and wrath. But the odds were too great. Knox was grasped in many hands, whirled off the bed, and bumped on the floor.

"Good!" panted Tom Merry. "Now then, Knox, we don't expect any gratitude, but if you're not dressed and down in ten minutes, we'll come back for you. We can't have this rotten slacking in the Sixth."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the juniors trooped off, leaving Knox breathless, gasping, and beside himself with rage.

But the prefect realised he had better dress and go down. He knew that Tom Merry & Co. would keep their word, and he did not wish for another visit of the juniors to his room.

The prefect was down inside the ten minutes, and there was a scowl on his face like a thundercloud. The juniors were at breakfast in the dining-room, and, as Knox came in, they all rose to their feet, and said in one voice:

"Good-morning, Knox!"

Knox stamped on to his place without replying. And the juniors grinned and went on with their breakfast.

CHAPTER 10.

Skimpole's Lecture!

AFTER breakfast, Tom Merry & Co. went out into the quadrangle. It was a pleasant morning, sunny and breezy, and the quad was very pleasant—far pleasanter than the class-rooms would have been.

It was very agreeable to the juniors to stroll in the open air instead of going in to class. Lessons, of course, were out of the question. There was no one to take a class, unless the seniors had taken them. And certainly any attempt in that direction would have been hotly resisted by the boys.

Whole holidays were not common at St. Jim's. And this unexpected holiday was ripping—so all the fellows declared. The juniors especially were of the opinion that a school without masters was likely to be a really great success—for a time, at least—and they enjoyed themselves to the utmost.

There was no occasion for the School House fellows to go over and wake the New House as it turned out. When Tom Merry & Co. came out after breakfast they found the New House fellows in the quad.

Figgins & Co. were looking particularly cheerful.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry, as he met Figgins. "What time did you go to bed last night?"

"Usual time," said Figgins.

"My hat!"

"Baker insisted upon it," said Figgins. "Baker's a decent chap, and we weren't going to rag him. Knox is different. We couldn't stand a chap like Knox in the New House, you know."

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Of course, we could have ragged Baker if we had liked, as I hear you did your prefect," Kerr remarked. "But it's bad form, you know."

"Weally, Kerr—"

"I think a school without a master is a ripping idea," said Fatty Wynn thoughtfully. "I have been thinking that it would be a splendid idea to celebrate the occasion by giving a ripping feed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Trust Fatty to think of that," grinned Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, I think it's a jolly good idea," said Fatty Wynn. "We could stand a big feed in the big school-room, and have the whole school to it, while the masters are away."

"Bai Jove!"

"I suppose you are not doing any lessons this morning?" Tom Merry asked.

"Rather not!"

"No fear!"

"Nobody to take classes," chuckled Figgins. "Of course, it wouldn't do for always, but—"

He broke off. From the school tower came the clamour of a bell.

Clang, clang, clang!

The juniors started and looked round.

It was the bell for classes, but as there were no classes at St. Jim's that morning, the reason for the bell's ringing was not clear.

Clang-ang-ang!

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"My hat!" said Figgins. "The masters can't have got back—at all events, not without our seeing them. It must be some silly ass larking."

"Let's go and see."

The crowd of fellows went into the School House. Others were coming from various directions, surprised and startled by the ringing of the class-room bell.

The ringing had ceased now, and as the juniors came along the Form-room passage, they caught sight of a junior in glasses, standing in the doorway of the Shell room.

"Hallo! It's Skimmy! Was it you ringing, Skimmy?"

Skimpole of the Shell blinked at them through his big glasses. There was a benevolent smile upon Skimpole's face. Skimpole was a member of the Shell, and he cultivated the most extraordinary opinions on the oddest subjects, and he was always willing to lecture upon those subjects when he could find any hearers.

"Yes, my dear friends," said Skimpole. "Pray come in."

"What's on?" demanded Figgins.

"The lecture!"

"The what?"

Skimpole beamed.

"The lecture," he said. "Pray come in and take your places, my dear fellows."

And Skimpole trotted back into the Form-room. The juniors, amazed and wondering, followed him in. There was no one in the room beside Skimpole. The genius of the Shell mounted the Form-master's desk, and rapped on it with a pointer.

"My dear friends," said Skimpole. "In the peculiar and really unprecedented circumstances of the school being left without a master, I regard it as an excellent opportunity for imparting some instruction in important matters to the ignorant and benighted. As I regard you all as exceedingly dull and uninformed—"

"What?"

"On the subjects I am going to touch upon," went on Skimpole. "Take Determinism—"

"I refuse to take anything of the sort," said Lowther.

"Take Determinism. I have selected this as the subject of my lecture, and I am assured that, as there are no lessons to be done this morning, you will all be pleased at this simple and useful way of passing four or five hours—"

"Bai Jove!"

"Four or five minutes, perhaps," murmured Blake. "And then bump the lecturer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"On subjects of reform, and of the improvement of the race," babbled Skimpole happily, "there is benighted ignorance in all quarters. I seek to lighten this darkness as far as St. Jim's is concerned, and I am ready to place my unusual brain-power and superior intelligence wholly at the disposal of my brethren."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Reflect, my friends—"

But, unfortunately for the brainy man of the Shell, the juniors were not in a mood to reflect, and the further words of Skimpole were drowned as a rag suddenly started between Figgins & Co. and the School House juniors.

In a few moments the rag became a riot as the juniors got more excited. Books and inkpots began to fly, and the noise in the Form-room was terrific.

"My dear friends," exclaimed Skimpole, striving to make himself heard above the din, "cease this unruly noise!"

But it was not for another five minutes that the rag petered out, with the rival juniors all dusty and dishevelled. Skimpole was still going strong.

"My dear friends, if you have finished your childish horse-play I will begin my lecture."

"Your mistake, Skimmy, you're ending!" said Blake.

With a rush, the juniors, still in an excited state, surrounded the lecturer, and jerked him down from Mr. Linton's desk. Then they sat him down on the floor with a bump.

"Oh!" gasped Skimpole.

"Gentlemen," said Blake, "the lecture is now over, and so is the lecturer! Dismiss!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" gasped Skimpole. "My dear friends!"

But his "dear friends" were crowding out of the class-room, and the genius of St. Jim's was left to address the desert air!

CHAPTER 11.

Untold News!

"TELEGRAM!"

"Bai Jove!"

"From Dieppe, I expect," grinned Tom Merry, as a crowd of fellows surrounded the telegraph boy from Rylcombe. "Who's it for, young shaver?"

"Master Knox, sir."

(Continued on page 14.)

TAKE A PEEP INTO—



Let the Editor be your pal! Write to him to-day, addressing your letters :
The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, chums! Our popular author, Martin Clifford, continues his long run of school story successes with another unbeatable yarn for next week. When you read it you will not hesitate to agree with me that it's the best school story of the week bar none! Most fellows are interested in boxing in some way, so it will please you to know that in

"THE FIGHTING FORM-MASTER!"

this branch of the art of self-defence is a big feature.

A new master takes over temporarily the position of Mr. Lathom, who is having a few weeks' holiday. When Tom Merry & Co. see him they are astonished to discover that the deputy master is none other than "Nemo," a clever amateur boxer they have seen fight. The coming to St. Jim's of Mr. Harrison, which is the name of the new master, also coincides with the menacing of the district by a gang of toughs, and as you will read in this great yarn, it proves just too bad for the toughs!

In addition to another grand instalment of the ripping St. Frank's serial

"THE SCHOOL FROM 'DOWN UNDER'!"

all our other favourite features are well up to their usual high standard, and full of interest and humour. Such a grand number as we have for next Wednesday will be sure to sell like hot cakes, so remember that the wise boy will make sure of his copy by ordering it in advance. Go to it, chums.

THERE'S MONEY IN FROGS.

Did you hear about the World's Jumping Championship for Frogs the other day? It was staged in America, and the big bullfrogs—at least, those which knew what was expected of them—did some thrilling leaping. For thrills and unexpected wins and defeats, frog-jumping fans say that this queer sport has greyhound racing absolutely beaten.

But rearing frogs for eating has more money in it than the running of frog athletics. They say the big frogs, properly prepared, taste just like pigeon-meat, though in some districts only the frogs' legs are eaten.

There are frog-farms in America where the marketing of these creatures is done on a very big and profitable scale. They collect the frogs on the special farms at night, blinding them with a searchlight and then picking them up and stuffing them into sacks. Those for shipment to other countries are cleaned and properly prepared, and then packed in barrels of ice.

Now then—who wants a job on a frog farm?

THE FIRE THAT WON'T GO OUT!

Thousands of acres of woodland and heath have been burnt out this summer in England because of carelessly dropped cigarette ends. Thousands of soldiers and civilians have fought those fires and put them out. But there is one fire in this country that has been burning for 170 years at least, and it won't be put out.

It is a big peat bog, in North Yorkshire, and always there is smoke and intense heat coming from it. So far the only use to which this extensive fire has been put is the roasting of potatoes placed on the hot peat by hungry tramps!

There is no danger to life and property by this fire, as there is when an oil-well suddenly blazes up and squirts its boiling oil hundreds of feet into the air. That towering column of oil-on-fire is a terrible affair, and the oil-fields abroad always maintain experts on the spot whose job it is to endeavour to put the blaze out by letting off a powerful explosive in the fiery mouth of the well—the explosion puffing out the flames as you would blow out a candle.

ONCE A LION—

The other day a man who runs a big lion farm carried out a test to see if some of his lions, which had been born

and brought up on his farm and didn't know what it was to run wild and hunt for food, would attack human beings if they had the chance.

There weren't any live volunteers forthcoming for the purpose of this exciting test, so he made some life-like dummies, put them into an old motor-car, trundled the car into the "tame" lions' enclosure, and then let the beasts loose.

In just over five minutes the fifteen lions had pulled the dummies to shreds, and when there weren't two stitches hanging together they started to rip the car good and hearty, and finished up by turning it upside-down. Once a lion, always a lion!

THE FIERY SERPENT.

Folks who believe in omens and good-luck bringers and unlucky numbers and things of that sort often get a shock. Lots of people believe it to be unlucky to spill the salt, for example, and to remove the bad-luck "spell" they immediately throw a pinch of the salt over their left shoulder. A fellow I know did that, in a restaurant. The salt he flicked over his shoulder went into the eye of a man who happened to be passing, and the salt-thrower promptly got a thick ear.

News reached this country the other day from Stamboul which reported a terrible disaster following the action of a man who did not believe in the Turkish superstition that it is unlucky to drive away a snake. He was a servant in the Turkish house which this snake entered. Laughing at his fellow servants' superstition, he threw a can of petrol over the reptile, and when the snake turned on him he flung a lighted match at it. The petrol blazed up, the house caught fire, the fire spread, and twenty-seven houses in the row were burned to the ground.

THE TOOTHACHE TREE.

There's a big old tree at Kohat, in North-west India, so full of nails that you'd have a job to drive another into its trunk or any branch within reach. Yet the people round about there still hasten to it when they have toothache and search diligently for one small spot where a nail might be hammered in.

They believe the "magic" of that nail-filled tree will drive the toothache away! Whether the magic has ever worked or not, they still roll up with hammers and nails whenever a tooth gets lively, in preference to paying the local dentist a visit.

In spite of its countless punctures, and the load of old iron it is now carrying, the sturdy, ancient tree still manages to put forth its leaves each year. The suggestion has been made that it would be more effective if the toothachy natives lugged the offending teeth into themselves and hammered those into the trunk instead of getting rid of nails!

THE EDITOR.

Nottingham, wants girl correspondents in California and Sweden; interested in film stars and detective books; also wants a girl friend for cycling trips; age 16.

R. Caplan, 42, Ashbourne Avenue, Golders Green, London, N.W.11, wants a pen pal outside London; age 13-14; stamp collecting and sports.

Miss Margery G. Vallins, 24, Alexandra Road, Worthing, Sussex, wants girl correspondents in France, Italy, Switzerland, U.S.A., and the Near East; age 18-22.

N. G. Attenborough, 11, Kinveachy Gardens, Charlton, London, S.E., wants a pen pal in Germany who has done about a year of secondary school English; age 11-15.

M. Shafi, Haji Bagh Street, Ferozepore, Punjab, India, wants to hear from readers keen on journalism.

(Continued on page 23.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,381.



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal post your notice to The GEM LIBRARY, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Henry Clark, 22, Sandringham Road, West Hartlepool, Co. Durham, wants a pen pal in South Africa and one in South America; age 12-16.

Miss Edna Piper, 37, Porchester Road, Mapperley,

ST. JIM'S WITHOUT MASTERS!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Knox! Where's Knox? Knox!"

The prefect came out of the House, and the telegram was handed to him. He read it, with a sour face.

"Is it from abroad, Knox?" Tom Merry asked.

The prefect scowled at him.

"Yes," he said.

"From Mr. Railton?"

"Yes."

"Oh! He has wired from Dieppe, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"What does he say?"

"Mind your own business," said Knox. And, putting the telegram into his pocket, the prefect turned and walked back into the School House.

There was a roar of indignation from the fellows. They naturally all wanted to know what was in the telegram. Mr. Railton had undoubtedly wired to Knox the time of his probable return, and the juniors wanted to know when to expect the masters back. Anyone but Knox would have told them immediately.

"Show us the telegram, Knox!" roared Lefevre of the Fifth. "That's what I say—show us the blessed telegram."

Knox made no reply. He went on into the House, leaving the juniors angry and disappointed.

"Let's go and take it away from him," said Gore.

"Good egg! Come on!"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"After all, he has a right to keep his own correspondence, if he likes," he remarked.

"But Railton must have intended us to know."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Make him show up!"

Tom Merry hesitated. There was little doubt in his mind that Mr. Railton had meant Knox to inform the boys of St. Jim's when his return was to be expected. He would not waste the money upon expressly telling him so in a telegram, but naturally he must have meant it.

Knox's object was pretty plain. The boys were taking matters very much into their own hands, and the prefect dared not interfere with them. He hoped that they would be caught in some act of lawlessness by the sudden return of the Housemaster.

If the school were in a riot, and Mr. Railton and the rest returned in the midst of it, Knox's object would be served.

The juniors knew that as well as Knox himself, and the idea naturally exasperated them.

They might be a little wild while the school was without a master, but they all wanted to "simmer down" and give Mr. Railton a dutiful and respectful reception when he came back to St. Jim's.

"I've got an idea!" said Figgins suddenly. "Baker is a prefect, and he has a right to ask to see the telegram."

"Bai Jove! Yaas, wathah!"

"I'll ask Knox to show it to Baker," said Figgins, with a chuckle. "And then Baker will tell us!"

"Good wheeze!"

Figgins dashed off in search of Baker. Baker was standing in the doorway of the New House, talking to Sefton of the Sixth. To judge by Sefton's expression, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,381.



No. 25. Vol. 1 (New Series).



MONTY LOWTHER CALLING

Hallo, everybody!

You can rely on me for the truth, if it is needed, as the witness

said when swearing in at the Wayland Police Court! "Hey, you can't swim in a public reservoir!" yelled the irate official.

"I'm not swimming—I'm drowning!" came the choking answer. A senior complains that you can't see scenery on a sea voyage. But he's just a Jonah! Got it, boys? "What was Newton's first thought when the apple fell on his head?" asked Mr. Linton, of Gore.

"He was jolly glad it wasn't a brick, sir?" suggested Gore. "Nothing is more annoying than the collapse of a carelessly-erected tent!" we read. Unless it is the collapse of a carefully-erected tent! Another headline says:

"Rylcombe Horticultural Society Doubles Membership!" Growing enthusiasm! Skimpole informs me that a court-martial is the highest officer in the British Army. I give up!

"How are finger-prints measured?" demands a reader. By the "Yard"! Another reader tells me he met a Paris boot-black who claims to have been a Russian nobleman. Still a man of polish! A Scot held to ransom by gangsters refused to sign a cheque for £1,000. "No," he said, "I'll no sign!"

"Oh, come," said the gangster chief, jamming a gun in his ribs. "For Auld Lang Sign!" "Riches," says the novelist, "take unto themselves wings and fly away."

We know the sort. Ostiches! "How much will these photographs cost me?" asked the sinner. "Five guineas a dozen!" responded the photographer. "Now look pleasant!"

"I ask you! One of Grimes' pals in the village badly wanted to go on the stage, and he got the producer of an amateur society to write him a recommendation to the Wayland Hippodrome. This was the recommendation: 'I know the applicant well, and would advise you to let him go—before the footlights!'"

As the man whom P.-c. Crump arrested the other night said: "I have kept to the straight and narrow path all my life, but last night I came to a turn in it, and fell into the ditch!" Mrs. Mimms, the House dame, is still very annoyed because walking along the Brightsea Parade in a thick sea mist, wearing her new scarlet coat, people kept coming up and trying to push letters into her mouth!

Of course, you've heard of the old lady who swallowed a teaspoon, and couldn't stir? Said the first lion to the second lion: "I'm scared stiff of this new trainer!"

"So am I," agreed the second; "he's got the courage of a lion!" As the chairman at the economy lecture finished up: "I am now going to ask you to give the speaker two hearty cheers!" All right, don't bother!

The Head has received a letter from a fag suggesting in all seriousness that holidays are too long, and that new terms should be started sooner. The Head is going on as well as can be expected!

George Gore claims to possess a silver cup for swimming 25 miles. He once claimed a prize in a competition, but that wasn't his, either!

Tom Merry

SAINTS SKITTLED BUT BEAT NORTH COUNTRYMEN

Wally D'Arcy at the Microphone

The team from the North of England brought to Eastwood House by Harold Holcliff, the boy wonder-batsman, are making a stolid show against the bowling of Fatty Wynn and Kangaroo. Holcliff swings a pretty bat, combining a repertoire of dexterous strokes with the ability to leap out at a "bad 'un" and lift it clear of the ropes! Fatty Wynn has got his first victim at 26—whoopee! Holcliff sticks, in spite of a succession of partners who can make little of the Falstaff's "googlies." Holcliff is still there when the last wicket falls at 50, Holcliff being 27 not out. I don't think St. Jim's will have much difficulty in passing their opponents' score.

Just a minute, though! Saints are actually "scraping" for runs—the first time I've seen them in real trouble this season. Merry leaves, victim to a "snap" catch at the wicket. Blake and D'Arcy and even Figgins fall quickly to brilliant catches. This is real fielding—the sort that blocks every avenue through which the batsmen could score, and speedily forces them into giving a catch. Five down for four runs—oh, jumping cat-fish! The "tail" hardly wags at all. Saints are all out for 10—I hardly dare think about it!

Tom Merry and his men take the field again, and it is clear that their small score has not unnerved them. St. Jim's fielding is up to that of the North Countrymen—though against Holcliff's polished batting, even Fatty Wynn is powerless. Crack! Another boundary "four"—I guess Fatty would rather be bowling against Bradman himself! Small success comes to Merry's men—Bruce goes, clean bowled for 20. The next man doesn't stay long. Holcliff finds another partner, however, in Duckwood, and together they carry the score to 148 before Wynn's toiling is at last rewarded by seeing Holcliff play on to his own wicket. Holcliff leaves, 101 to his credit—a gallant century against class bowling! Duckwood is set now, but his partners are at sixes and sevens. Fatty Wynn, untiring, runs through these fellows and winds up a magnificent bowling spell by just snicking Duckwood's leg-stump with a

St. Jim's News Reel

Fatty Wynn says he ascended the cliffs at Folkestone in two minutes. By the cliff escalator!

If the one-way street system spreads to the sea, we can visualise Channel swimmers being forbidden to cross direct from Calais to Dover. They will have to go down the Channel, across the Atlantic, round Australia, and back via the Baltic and the North Sea!

Herries says he isn't sure where he would like to take Tower for a summer holiday. Come on, you holiday resorts! Which town claims to provide the best air for bulldogs?

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Merry's Weekly



Week Ending August 4th, 1934.

TITLED OUT FOR TEN NORTH COUNTRY OPPONENTS

spinner, Duckwood having scored 54. The North all out for 213.

The scorers inform us that Merry and his men need 254 to win—with a little over two hours to get them. Surely a Herculean task? Tom Merry and Gussy are just going out to tackle the job. They look confident.

Clack!—there she goes. The fieldsmen are getting some work to do to start with! I'm glad to see the scoreboard moving in our favour. These fellows from the North are bowling fast, too—Duckwood is slinging them down in express style, every one a wicket-spreader! Merry faces the bowling cool as an icicle, keen of eye and swift to act. This is something like batting—Merry picking the ball to hit with Hobbs-like discretion, and Gussy dealing with anything and everything with elegant ease. Gus can bat when he's in the mood—now we're seeing something! Fifty on the board, both batsmen still there! Gus gives a difficult chance in the long-field, but the fieldsmen doesn't quite get to it. At 97, however, he is caught at the wicket, a gallant 34 to his name. Blake follows in. Blake's North Country, too—Yorkshire born and bred—and he's eager to show his countrymen a thing or two. Now, watch Blake—

by Jove! Blake usually bats stolidly, being very difficult to shift. He's showing aggression now—driving all round the wicket with smashing strokes. Merry is bowled for 57, with the total at 130—now Blake, with Kangaroo for partner, carries on the good work. Kangaroo finds himself playing second fiddle for once! Blake has the bit between his teeth with a vengeance! His batting is not elegant, but it has power and direction. His fifty rattles merrily on the board! Kangaroo goes—unlucky to be given l.b.w., I think. It's left for Blake to hold the fort—and if the others can keep up an end, Blake will do it! The second hundred rattles up—fifty-four to win, and watch Blake flogging them! Figgins gives sound help, playing a steady game while Blake, inspired, continues his splendid innings! North Countrymen sweat in the field, while Yorkshiremen Blake knocks the cover off the ball! The last man in with him when Blake sends a great shot through the covers to win the game for the Saints—his own total being 126. Great stuff, Blake! Howzat, Yorkshire?

Skimpole says that as the 24-hour clock system is growing in use, he is now looking for a seaside resort with an average of 24 hours' sunshine per diem!

What is more startling than to be overwhelmed by a huge wave sweeping inshore? asks Skimpole.

To be overwhelmed by two huge waves, we should imagine!

Fatty Wynn says he would like to join the Navy. Figgins says a quarter deck would be quite insufficient for a fellow of Fatty's girth—he would need at least a half deck!

LOOK THROUGH OUR TELEVISOR

DAME TAGGLES SPEAKING



There's something about a tuckshop that attracts everybody! At least, so I find it. I've kept the school tuckshop at St. Jim's now for nigh on twenty-five years, during which time my husband, Ephraim Taggles, has acted as gate-porter.

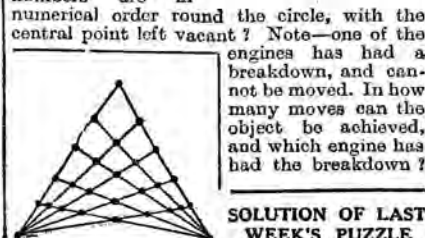
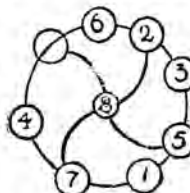
They say boys' tastes change as time goes on, but don't you believe it! Boys are always the same when it comes to a tasty sweetmeat—and bless them, why shouldn't they be? Some of my special sweets have been prepared from the same recipe ever since I took over the tuckshop. I even get customers from the village at Rylcombe coming after my sweets.

Very discerning young gentlemen they are, too, to-day! Perhaps in that respect they are a bit smarter than they used to be. They know what's good for them, too, except some of the very young gentlemen, in the Third and Second Forms. I am afraid they frequently over-eat and then the matron comes and warns me not to sell them so much toffee and bullseyes—as if I can help it!

Now and again I have had a little rudeness from boys like Master Mellish and Master Crooke. Only the other afternoon, Master Crooke was ordering me about in my shop because I didn't move my old bones fast enough to please him. However, Master D'Arcy looked in just at that moment. I didn't think Master D'Arcy would have done it, but he seized Master Crooke by the scruff of the neck and dragged him half-way across the quadrangle, finally ducking him head-first in the fountain. There are very few of Master Crooke's sort, however, and the others—well, it's a pleasure to serve them.

CALIBAN'S PUZZLE CORNER

The diagram shows a crazy railway. The numbers in the circles indicate engines at stations, but one station is vacant. Can you move the engines, one at a time, from point to point, so that their numbers are in numerical order round the circle, with the central point left vacant? Note—one of the engines has had a breakdown, and cannot be moved. In how many moves can the object be achieved, and which engine has had the breakdown?



SOLUTION OF LAST
WEEK'S PUZZLE

he was not having a pleasant time. As a matter of fact, Baker had discovered that Sefton had been at Knox's little party the night before, and he was giving Sefton his opinion on the transaction in exceedingly plain English.

"Baker," exclaimed Figgins breathlessly, "there's a telegram from Mr. Railton!"

Baker turned away from Sefton.

"Where?" he asked.

"It's come for Knox."

"What's the news?"

"Knox hasn't told us."

"Oh, all right," said Baker, "I'll see him!"

He crossed to the School House, with the delighted Figgins at his heels. Baker went into the School House, and the juniors followed him in a crowd. They wanted to see the interview, if they could.

Baker knocked at Knox's study door, and opened it. Knox was sitting at the table, smoking a cigarette and practising at dealing cards. He was in full view of the juniors as the door opened. Baker stepped into the study and closed the door, much to the disappointment of the juniors crowded in the doorway.

"Bai Jove, Knox is an uttah wottah!" said D'Arcy. "Fancy his havin' the cheek to try to cowwect us, and then cultivate those shady habits himself! If the Head knew he wouldn't be allowed to remain a prefect!"

"No fear!"

"Baker isn't that sort," said Figgins in a superior tone. "We shouldn't stand Knox in the New House, you know."

"Rats!"

"Wats!"

"We don't have that sort of thing over there," said Figgins loftily. "We simply couldn't stand Knox."

"You'll stand knocks, like those you had in the Form-room, if you don't cheese it!" said Kangaroo wrathfully.

"Look here—"

"Oh, cheese it, you New House waster!"

"School House fathead!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Tom Merry. "Pax, you asses! There's going to be a row in the study, and that's enough!"

"Bai Jove!"

There was no doubt about it. Through the closed door of the study could be heard two voices rising in angry altercation.

CHAPTER 12.

The Cunning of Knox!

BAKER had closed the door behind him as he entered to shut off from the view of the juniors the School House prefect, sitting there with cigarette and cards.

Knox half rose to his feet, looking at Baker with a bitter smile. Baker was a plain, rugged fellow, a splendid cricketer, and very direct and straightforward in his ways. He was quite unlike Knox, and the two had never been on good terms.

Baker was trying hard to be civil now, though he could hardly restrain his scorn at the sight of the School House senior's occupation.

"What do you want?" asked Knox.

"You've had a telegram?"

"Yes."

"From Mr. Railton?"

"Yes."

"Will you show it to me?"

Knox slipped the cards into a drawer, and then rose. He leaned carelessly against the window-frame and looked at Baker.

"What do you want to see it for?" he asked.

Baker stared.

"Naturally I want to know when to expect the masters back," he said.

"Yes, I suppose so."

"As a prefect, I suppose I am entitled to ask you?" said Baker warmly.

"I suppose so."

"Besides, you have no motive for keeping it a secret, I presume," said Baker, looking puzzled. "Mr. Railton must have meant you to tell all the school."

"I don't suppose he did. If he had wanted that he would have said so. The telegram is to me, and I'm at liberty to keep it to myself, if I choose," said Knox tartly.

"Nonsense! The news was intended for all of us, and you know that perfectly well!"

"I know nothing of the sort!"

Baker drew a quick breath.

"Have you any motive for keeping that telegram to yourself?" he asked.

"Perhaps."

"I demand to see it."

Knox shifted uneasily.

"Suppose I show it to you, would you keep it to yourself?" he said.

"Why should I?"

"I'll tell you," said Knox slowly. "The juniors here have refused to obey me, or to regard me in any way. There is nothing but insolence and insubordination here."

"It's different in my House," said Baker.

"Well, that's how it is here. The young scoundrels have taken matters into their own hands, and have started running things to please themselves. They're going from bad to worse, and before the day's out I expect them to have made a regular riot of it."

"Well?"

"That's the reason. When Mr. Railton returns I want him to catch them all, that's all!" said Knox viciously. "It's better than making a report to him if he finds them playing the very dickens in the House."

Baker frowned.

"It looks to me as if you want to make trouble for the sake of getting your Housemaster down on the juniors," he said. "If they know when Mr. Railton is coming they will make it a point to get into order by then."

"That's just why I'm not showing them the message. Railton can see them as I've seen them—at their worst!" said Knox, with a sneer.

"It's not playing the game, Knox!" retorted Baker. "What you are trying to do is to play a mean trick on the juniors, and I don't mind telling you so in plain English!"

"Thank you!" said Knox, with a sneer. "And now you've told me perhaps you will have the kindness to leave my study!"

"I want to know when the masters are returning first."

Knox's jaw seemed to set grimly.

"I'm not going to tell you," he said.

"You have the telegram still?"

Knox's hand moved towards his pocket, and the movement was enough. A telegram was there, and there was no disguising it.

"Show it to me," said Baker quietly.

"I decline to show it to you!"

"I demand to see it!"

Knox shrugged his shoulders.

"Demand away!" he said.

Baker drew a deep breath. His anger was rising, but he tried to keep himself in hand. He came a step nearer to Knox, and the rascally prefect moved a step back towards the grate, where a pile of wastepapers and cigarette packets was burning. His eyes were on Baker's all the time.

"I want to see that telegram!" said Baker.

"You can't!"

"You refuse to show it to me?"

"Yes!"

"Then I shall take it from you!" said Baker, between his teeth.

Knox backed away farther towards the fire. His hand was in his pocket now, crumpling the telegram in his fingers.

"You won't!" he said.

Baker stood with his hands clenched. There was anger in his face, but he was still trying to restrain his temper and to avoid trouble. He cared much more than Knox did what the effect of a struggle between two prefects would have upon the juniors.

"Give me the telegram!" he said.

"I won't!"

"Tell me what I want to know—what I've a right to know!"

"I won't!"

Baker said no more. He came springing forward.

"You'd better stand back," said Knox. "If you lay hands on me there will be trouble, my fine fellow."

Baker paused for a moment.

"It's disgraceful enough, a fight between prefects," he said. "I want to avoid it. But I have a right to see that telegram. There's a crowd of juniors in the passage, and they all know that I've come to see it. Do you think I'll go away and let all the youngsters know you've refused me and I haven't insisted? Besides, I want to know myself when the masters will be here. I want to have my House in order. Will you show me the telegram?"

"No."

"Then I'll take it, and the blame is yours!"

Baker was upon the School House prefect the next moment. But even as he grasped Knox, the latter jerked the telegram from his pocket and threw it into the midst of the blazing papers in the grate.

Baker uttered a cry and sprang to save it. But Knox grasped him and struggled and forced him back.

The flimsy paper blazed up.

Baker exerted his strength and hurled Knox from him. The School House cad was no match for the rugged New House prefect. Knox went with a crash to the floor, and Baker ran to the grate.

But it was too late. The telegram had been consumed, and only the white ash of it was left.

Baker clicked his teeth. He was intensely angry. He turned towards Knox, who had risen, dusty and shaken, with a very spiteful look on his face.

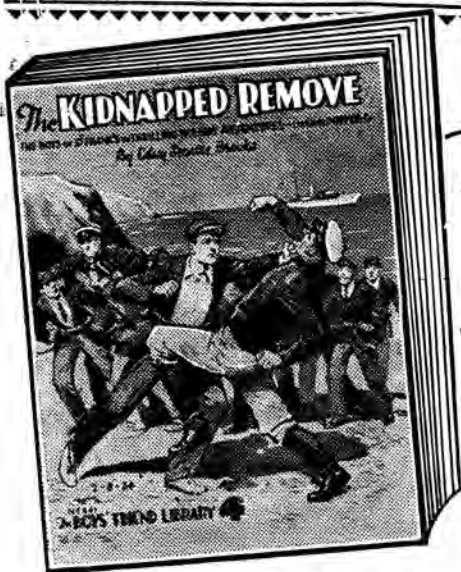
"You cad!" shouted Baker.

"Will you get out of my study?"

"By Jove, I've a good mind to give you the licking of your life, you mean cad!" Baker shouted, clenching his fists.

"Quite an interesting entertainment for the juniors outside!" sneered Knox.

Baker's hands dropped to his side again. That thought restrained him; there was no purpose, to be served by licking



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Knox now, and it would be a disgraceful scene, lowering to the dignity of the Sixth—for nothing!

Without a word more, the New House prefect swung to the door. He went out into the passage without looking at Knox, and closed the door behind him. He ran into the crowd of juniors, and there was a general shout.

"What's the news, Baker?"

"When are they coming back?"

"I don't know!" said Baker shortly.

"But the telegram—"

"Knox has burned the telegram!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Bai Jove!"

"But didn't he tell you—" began Kerr.

Baker did not stop to be questioned. He strode from the School House with a clouded brow. The juniors dispersed, angry and disappointed, after howling some expressive things through Knox's keyhole. There was only one fellow at St. Jim's who knew when the masters were returning. That was Knox—and Knox did not mean to say a word!

CHAPTER 13.

Lumley-Lumley Says No!

DINNER was served at the usual time in the dining-room in the School House. The juniors came to it with keen appetites from rambling by wood and river. They found that the open air had made them hungrier than "mugging" Latin in the Form-rooms. The morning had been spent most enjoyably, and some of the fellows were beginning to think that a school run permanently without masters would be a great institution.

There was an unusual buzz of talk over dinner. Discipline being relaxed, the fellows allowed themselves all sorts of freedom. They held conversations at the top of their voices across the Hall, and pelted one another with bread. Dinner proceeded somewhat uproariously.

Knox did not interfere. Sometimes he looked at the juniors with a sour smile, but that was all.

Perhaps he was thinking of the return of Mr. Railton and his party, the hour of which only he knew.

The juniors had already ceased to worry about that.

The masters would return, and their unaccustomed liberty would be curtailed again; but until then they could eat, drink, and be merry.

And they did!

Dinner having been disposed of, somebody suggested a chorus, and the old walls of the School House rang with rousing voices.

Then the fellows poured out into the quadrangle.

Lumley-Lumley was going down to the cricket pitch with Tom Merry & Co., when Snipe pulled at his sleeve. The one-time Outsider of St. Jim's looked round.

"What do you want?" he asked abruptly.

"Just a word," said Snipe.

"Go ahead, then."

Snipe glanced at Tom Merry and the others who were standing by. They walked on at once, and left Lumley-Lumley alone with Snipe.

"Well," said Lumley-Lumley impatiently, "what is it? I've no time to waste, Snipe."

"I won't keep you long. But what's the hurry?"

"I'm going to play cricket."

"Oh, cricket!" said Snipe, with a sneer.

"Yes," snapped Lumley-Lumley, "and a better occupation, I guess, than you and Mellish and Crooke have got for this afternoon!"

Snipe shrugged his shoulders.

"Look here!" he said. "We're getting up a little party—"

"What for?"

"It's a smoking concert."

Lumley-Lumley stared.

"A what?" he exclaimed.

"A smoking concert," said Snipe coolly. "While the cat's away, you know."

"You silly ass!"

"I think it's a good idea. The masters are away, and there's no danger. We're going to have a smoking concert in the top room of the old tower—that's a quiet spot. We're going to have ginger-beer, and a taste of something else, and cigarettes. Crooke of the Shell is standing the smokes."

"The cat!"

"Crooke's coming, and Mellish, and Gore, and another fellow or two. Will you come?"

"No, I won't!"

"Look here, Lumley—"

"I've done with all that!" said Lumley-Lumley. "I've told you so before, in plain English, I guess. You nearly got me expelled from St. Jim's once. I tell you I've done with it all! And you'd better have done with it, too!"

"Rats!"

"Chuck up the idea, Snipe, and come down to the cricket," said Lumley-Lumley earnestly. "You'll feel all the better for it."

"More rats!"

"Well, I'm not coming to your precious smoking concert, that's all!"

And Lumley-Lumley turned away.

"Hold on!" said Snipe, in alarm. "Mum's the word, you know; don't say anything to Tom Merry and the rest. They might interfere."

"I guess they won't."

"Well, mum's the word. I was speaking to you in confidence, you know."

Lumley-Lumley hesitated for a moment.

"Well, all right," he said.

"You won't say anything?"

"No."

"All serene, then. But you're a fool not to come!"

Lumley-Lumley did not reply. He walked away after the cricketers, and Snipe shrugged his shoulders, and strolled towards the old tower. The grey ivy-clad tower was a relic of the earliest building that had occupied the site of St. Jim's. A great part of it had crumbled away into ruins, but it still rose above the surrounding buildings, and the top of it commanded a wide view of the countryside.

In the top room of the old tower the fellows sometimes gave little feuds but certainly the room had never been used for a smoking concert before. That was a little idea of Snipe's, and could only have been carried out while the masters were away from St. Jim's. The young blackguards were certainly "going strong" this time.

Lumley-Lumley was looking troubled as he joined the cricketers. He was thinking of the fellows who had accepted Snipe's invitation, and of the risks they were running.

"What's up?" Tom Merry asked him abruptly.

Lumley-Lumley coloured.

"Oh, nothing!" he said.

"You're playing?"

"I guess so."

Lumley-Lumley laughed a little.

"Did you think I was going off with Snipe?" he asked.

"That's all done with. Only, he's told me something that bothers me a little. Still, I guess that's no business of mine."

And Lumley-Lumley made a gesture, as if dismissing the matter from his mind.

Tom Merry gave him a curious look, but asked no questions. The hero of the Shell was not of an inquisitive turn of mind.

"Hallo!" said Figgins. "Hallo, my sons! We're going to lick you this time!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Good!" he said. "We're ready, if you can do it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And, as preparations for the game were made, the thought of Snipe and his little smoking party in the tower soon vanished from Lumley-Lumley's mind.

CHAPTER 14.

The Smoking Party!

MELLISH was waiting for Snipe in the doorway of the old tower.

Snipe joined him, and answered his inquiring look with a shake of the head.

"He won't come?" asked Mellish.

"No!"

"The ass!"

"Oh, he's sticking to it!" said Snipe. "I suppose he knows his own game best. Of course, it's all humbug. He's got an axe to grind."

(Continued on the next page.)



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"Of course," agreed Mellish.

"But he won't come now. Have the others gone up!"

"Yes—and Crooke and Gore."

"Good! Let's go up, too."

"Hallo, kids!"

The greeting came from Wally of the Third—D'Arcy minor. The hero of the Third had just looked into the tower, and he seemed surprised at seeing the two Fourth Formers there.

Mellish scowled.

"Get out!" he exclaimed angrily.

"Rats!" said Wally cheerfully. "I'm not in, for one thing, and I don't see why I should get out, for another. What are you beggars up to?"

It was rather a cool question, considering that Wally D'Arcy belonged to a lower Form. It exasperated the two Fourth Formers.

"You buzz along," said Snipe threateningly.

"Bosh!"

Snipe and Mellish came quickly towards him. Wally backed away, but not quite in time. They grasped him, and dragged him into the tower.

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Wally.

"Bump the young cad!" said Mellish.

"What-ho!" said Snipe emphatically.

"Here, hold on! Leggo! Chuck it! Ow! Oh!"

Bump, bump, bump!

D'Arcy minor smote the ground hard, in a sitting posture, three times in succession.

And he roared.

"Now then, you young rotter, will you bunk?"

"No," roared the exasperated Wally. "I won't! Yah!"

"Kick him out!"

Wally was dragged to the doorway of the tower, and slung round. Then two feet were planted simultaneously behind him.

Wally spun round and out of the tower, and dropped on the ground on his hands and knees.

He was up again in a twinkling, with clenched fists and flaming eyes. The Fourth Formers stood grinning in the doorway of the tower, and for a moment Wally looked as if he would charge at them recklessly. But he thought better of it.

"You worms!" he shouted.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You measly rotters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Words failed him. He stamped off, and the two Fourth Formers turned, laughing, into the tower.

"We've got rid of that prying young rotter, at all events," said Snipe.

And Mellish nodded assent.

The Fourth Formers ascended the spiral stair of the old tower. The thick wall was pierced with narrow windows, wide inside, but mere slits where they opened upon the air. Through the slits in the stonework they could see the wide, green fields, and the winding river, and the grey building of St. Jim's. But the two rascals had no eye for scenery, and it was old to them, anyway. They tramped on up the winding stone staircase till they came out in the top room of the tower.

The roof had long ago gone, and the windows were crumbled. In rainy weather the room was drenched, but in fine weather it was very pleasant.

Crooke and Gore were seated there, on wooden benches, and Crooke had opened a cardboard box which was crammed with cigarettes.

He grinned at the newcomers.

"What was the row down there?" he asked.

"Only a fag poking into the tower," said Snipe. "We made it warm for him. We don't want anybody calling in just at present."

Crooke chuckled.

"Quite right," he remarked. "Have you got the matches?"

"Here they are!"

"And here's the ginger-pop," said Gore, opening a bag. "I've got a dozen bottles of ginger-pop, and one of something else."

"Good egg!"

And with a very mysterious air, Gore produced a smaller bottle, which contained an amber fluid.

The juniors looked at it with awe.

"What is it?" asked Mellish.

"Brandy!"

"Phew!"

"Makes the other stuff go down splendidly," said Gore.

"Does it?"

"Of course it does!" said Gore irritably. "It's—it's splendid stuff!"

"Oh!"

"Try it!"

"I—I'd rather you had some first,"

Gore laughed scoffingly.

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"Oh, you're a soft ass!" he exclaimed. "Look here!"

He poured out a glass of ginger-beer, and then removed the cork from the glass bottle. He poured out some of the liquid it contained, but took great care to allow only very little to go into the ginger-beer.

"Now watch me," he said.

"You haven't got much there," said Snipe.

"Well, no good overdoing it, you know."

"Rather risky going down the stairs here, if it got into your head," grinned Snipe.

"Well, one can't be too careful."

"Let's see you drink it," said Mellish.

Gore drank some of the stuff.

In spite of himself, he made a wry face. He had not put very much brandy into the ginger-beer, but just enough to spoil the flavour, and make it nasty to the taste.

Of all the four young duffers in the tower, not one was there who would not have preferred his ginger-beer in its natural state. And they would much rather have had ices or jam-tarts than cigarettes. But nothing would have induced them to admit as much. They wanted to play up to one another, and to themselves if possible.

"You don't seem to be enjoying it," said Mellish.

"Oh, it's ripping."

"Well, you can give me some—but not too much. I—I like it awfully, only—only there's no sense in overdoing a thing, is there?"

"Oh, be a man!" said Gore.

"Rats! I'm not going to get tipsy and tumble down those blessed stairs to please you! Drink the filthy stuff yourself," said Mellish.

"Order!" said Crooke pacifically. "Who's going to smoke?"

"That's more in my line," said Mellish.

"Here you are, then."

The four juniors lighted up. They sat round the room, puffing at the cigarettes with an elaborate appearance of enjoyment.

"This is ripping," said Gore.

"Oh, splendid!"

"You see—Hullo, what's that?"

"My only Aunt Jane!"

It was the voice of Wally on the stone stair. The next moment Wally, and Jameson, and Curly Gibson and two or three others of the Third Form, looked into the room.

"My only Aunt Jane! They're smoking."

CHAPTER 15.

Wally on the Warpath!

THE smokers leaped to their feet.

In the first moment of alarm they feared that Lumley-Lumley might have given them away, and sent Tom Merry & Co. to look into the matter.

Their alarm subsided somewhat as they saw that the visitors were only fags of the Third Form.

But Wally & Co. had evidently come on business. They sauntered into the room, and a crowd of Third Formers appeared behind them on the stone landing and the stairs below. The Third Form had turned up in force.

Gore and his friends glared at them.

"What do you fags want here?" demanded Crooke.

"Trouble," said Wally sweetly.

The fags chuckled.

"Get out!"

"Rats!"

"We'll kick you out if you don't go!" yelled Crooke.

"Try it!"

The Shell fellows made a forward movement. Wally's jaw set squarely, and his fists clenched.

"Line up, chaps!" he said.

The fags were crowding in. There were a dozen of them in the room already, and more were behind on the stairs. The odds were hopeless—the four juniors were simply overwhelmed if it came to a struggle.

"Well, ain't you coming on?" asked Wally, with a grin, as Crooke changed his mind, and held back from the attack.

"Look here, you get out of this," said Crooke.

"No fear."

"We came here for a quiet smoke," said Gore. "Get out!"

"We ain't looking for you two," said Wally cheerfully. "Snipe and Mellish are our mutton. They went for me a little while back, and gave me a bumping. They were two to one. Now we're a dozen to two, and they're going to have the bumping back—with interest. See?"

"You cheeky fags!" snarled Snipe.

"Collar them, kids!"

"Get away!" shouted Snipe. "I'll smash you if you lay your paws on me!"

"Collar him!"

Five or six fags rushed at Snipe.

He struck out furiously, and Curly Gibson, with a roar,



In the wild excitement of the dance, none of the juniors noticed the opening of the door at first. D'Arcy was the first to see, and he uttered a sudden exclamation. "Bai Jove! It's Mr. Wallton!" The St. Jim's masters had returned, to catch the juniors red-handed!

rolled over. The next moment Jameson dropped on top of him. But Snipe went down then, with the fags piling on him.

Mellish was collared at the same moment, but he did not resist. He knew that the odds were too great, and his only desire was to avoid rough handling as far as possible. It might be cheek on the part of the Third to attack Fourth Formers and Shell fellows, but they were doing it—there was no doubt about that—and Mellish wanted to get off as cheaply as possible.

Crooke and Gore, however, were not so patient. For Shell chaps to be ragged by Third Form fags was simply intolerable. The two of them rushed at Wally & Co., hitting out. They were both powerful fellows, in comparison with the fags, and they drove the youngsters back for a moment.

But only for a moment.

Wally & Co. rallied, and, by force of numbers, they overwhelmed the Shell fellows, sending them to the stone floor, and rolling over them.

"Get 'em!" gasped Wally.

"Sit on their heads!"

"Hurrah!"

There was no doubt that Crooke & Co. had had the worst of it. They were sprawling on the floor, the four of them, with innumerable fags sitting upon them.

The Shell fellows were helpless prisoners in the hands of the Third.

Wally rose to his feet, put his crumpled collar straight, rubbed a bruised nose, and grinned.

"We've got 'em!" he remarked.

"Lemme gerrup!" spluttered Gore.

"No fear!"

"I'll—I'll—I'll—"

"Sit on his head if he won't shut up!"

"Grrrrrrroooooch!"

Jameson sat on Gore's head.

"Now," said Wally, "my idea is— My only Aunt Jane, what's the matter, Jimmy?"

"Yow!" roared Jameson, springing into the air.

"What the—"

"Yaroooh!" yelled Jameson. "He's—he's bitten me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh! What are you cackling at, you silly ass? There's nothing funny in that! Yow! Oh! Yaroooh!"

"Lemme gerrup!"

"Gerroff, you beasts!"

"They've been smoking here," said Wally, looking round at the cigarettes that were scattered on the floor. "My hat! And drinking, too! Rotters!"

"Blackguards!" said Curly Gibson.

"Worms!"

"We don't approve of this sort of thing," said Wally, with a serious shake of his head. "While the masters are away, it's our duty to look after the morals of the Fourth and the Shell."

The fags chuckled at the idea.

"There's nothing to cackle at!" said Wally severely. "If the older chaps can't look after themselves, it's our bounden duty to look after them. And we're going to do it!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The best idea is to make an example of them," said Wally. "Stand them on their hind legs—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And tie their hands. You can tear up their handkerchiefs to tie them with, and you can use their ties as well."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The four juniors were dragged up.

They recommenced struggling at once, but with a score of hands grasping them they had no chance at all of getting loose.

Their hands were tied behind their backs, and then they gave in, scowling and furious, but unresisting, in the midst of the cackling crowd of fags.

"Good!" said Wally, surveying them. "Now stick their blessed cigarettes over them—behind their ears, and in their hair, and in their buttonholes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The four smokers were adorned with cigarettes. As Crooke had paid quite a little sum for that box of "smokes," he was not pleased to see them wasted in this way. But the fags were not thinking of pleasing Crooke.

They pinned cigarettes on the smokers till they were simply bristling with them.

Then Wally uncorked the little glass bottle and sniffed.

"What is it?" asked Jameson.

"Brandy, I think!"

"My hat!"

"They can have it," said Wally, and he poured the

contents of the glass bottle in equal portions over the heads of the four juniors.

The fumes of the liquor made the recipients feel quite sick, and they changed colour visibly. Wally finished by smashing the bottle on the floor. There was no doubt that D'Arcy minor was a most strenuous advocate of the temperance cause.

"What about the ginger-beer?" asked Jones minimus.

"They may as well have that, too. It may wash out the smell of the other stuff!"

"Keep off, you beast!" roared Gore.

"Can't be did! It's your ginger-pop, and you're going to have it!"

The ginger-beer was poured over the unhappy blades. They did not feel nearly so doggyish now.

"Now bring them down," said Wally.

"What are you going to do?" howled Crooke.

"I'm going to show you to Tom Merry as a warning that he's neglecting his duties," said Wally severely. "I'm

AS USUAL!



Magistrate: "Why on earth has that plumber returned to the dock?"

Clerk: "He's forgotten his sentence, sir!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to T. McHugh, 21, Canning Street, Belfast.

going to point out to Tom Merry that I really haven't time to look after the morals of the middle Forms, and he'll have to look after them himself!"

"You cheeky young beast!"

"Rats! March the bounders out."

"Hurrah!"

The "bounders" were marched down the stairs and marched out. Smelling vilely of the liquor that had been thrown over them, wet and furious, panting with rage, the four smokers were marched out of the old tower, and the Third, with loud shouts, marched them off in triumph to the cricket field where Tom Merry & Co. were still playing.

CHAPTER 16.

A Ducking for the "Gay Dogs"!

TOM MERRY had just bowled Figgins, and another batsman was coming in when the noisy troop of fags appeared on the junior cricket ground. The School House fieldsmen waved their hands excitedly at the invaders.

"Get off the ground!" roared Monty Lowther.

"Keep back!"

"Keep off the grass."

Wally & Co. took not the slightest notice of the shouting, or of the wild excitement on the field. They marched in with their prisoners.

"Get out, you young chumps!" shouted Tom Merry.

But the fags did not stop. They marched on till they were right on the pitch, and the game had to be stopped. A shouting circle of cricketers surrounded them, brandishing their fists.

"You cheeky young bounders!"

"Get off the pitch!"

"Keep your wool on, my dear infants," said Wally cheerfully. "We've brought you something that belongs to you!"

The four prisoners were bumped down on the cricket pitch. They lay there wriggling, shedding cigarettes on all sides.

"Gweat Scott!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Gweat Scott! What does this mean, Wally, you young wascal?"

Wally chuckled.

"It's a smoking party," he explained.

"Bai Jove! What?"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"It's a smoking party. We found them in the tower, and we've brought 'em to you," said Wally. "You can look after 'em! Of course, while the masters are away we feel bound to look after the Shell and the Fourth a bit—"

Wally was interrupted by a shout, and several of the cricketers brought stumps and bats into view.

"Kick 'em off the field!" shouted Lowther.

"Better cut," murmured Jameson.

And the fags "cut." They marched off, poked at with bats and stumps, but yelling defiance as they went. Gore and Crooke and Mellish and Snipe were left wriggling on

the pitch. Tom Merry & Co. looked at them, and sniffed, and sniffed again.

"Beastly cads!" said Jack Blake. "My hat, what a giddy niff!"

"Bai Jove, they've been dwinkin'—"

"And smoking!"

"Rotters!"

"Let us loose!" growled Crooke. "Can't you untie these things, you silly chumps, instead of standing round like a lot of stupid dummies!"

"Bai Jove—"

"Untie them!" said Tom Merry scornfully. "If this is the way you chaps are going to amuse yourselves while the masters are away the sooner they come back the better."

"Oh, mind your own bisney!" snapped Gore.

"They smell horrid," said Blake. "They want washing. My idea is that they should have a washing, especially as they've interrupted the game."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Yank them along to the fountain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let us alone!" roared Crooke. "If you dare to duck us I'll—I'll—Ow!"

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry. "Collar the cads!"

The cricketers seized the four hapless smokers. They were dragged off the cricket field and marched away, by no means gently, to the fountain in the quad.

There, in spite of their loud yells and fierce expostulations, they were ducked in the water.

Splash! Splash! Splash! Splash!

The four "bounders" went splashing in, and came out drenched and dripping, looking half drowned.

The smell of the liquor was certainly washed away, but the unhappy "blades" did not seem to feel any the better for their ducking.

"Now cut off!" said Tom Merry sternly. "And remember you jolly well won't be allowed to play the blackguard game even if the masters are away!"

The young rascals had no nerve left to reply. They could only crawl dimly away, followed by the laughter and jeers of the juniors.

It was a lesson the smart set of the School House were not likely to forget in a hurry.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as the cricketers walked back to the field. "Bai Jove, you know, I wegard that as asimplay disgustin'! It's all vewy well chuckin' pweep, or having a sing-song in the dining'-woom, but smokin' and dwinkin' is wotten! I wegard them as a set of wotten boundahs to take advantage like this of the Head being away!"

"Quite right, Gussy!"

"Let's get back to the cricket," said Tom Merry. "We shan't lick the New House by dark if we don't buck up!"

Figgins grinned.

"You won't lick the New House by Christmas if you buck up ever so much," he chuckled.

And Figgins, as it happened, was right, for the dusk came on before the match could be finished, and the juniors left off playing with the result undecided. As they streamed back towards the school the uniform of a telegraph boy was seen. He had a telegram in his hand, and he was just handing it to Knox, the prefect.

Tom Merry and his friends paused to look on.

"Another wire from Mr. Railton, I suppose," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Any news, Knox?" called out Monty Lowther, as the telegraph boy walked away and the prefect turned towards the School House.

Knox glanced at him.

"Don't ask questions," he replied.

"Was that wire from Mr. Railton?"

"Find out!"

And Knox, crumpling the telegram in his pocket, went into the House.

Blake snorted.

"That chap wants a jolly good-bumping!" he exclaimed. "I don't see why we shouldn't give him one, too!"

"Bai Jove! Yaas, wathah!"

"I wonder what was in the wire?" said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "I suppose it was from Mr. Railton. Why should he wire a second time?"

Blake wrinkled his brows in an effort of thought.

"I don't see why he should wire a second time from France," he said. "But if he caught a boat back, and landed in Southampton or Newhaven, he would wire to tell Knox that he was coming. That wire may mean that he has landed and is coming on by the next train."

"Bai Jove!"

Some of the juniors' faces grew long.

"Then the game's up," said Manners, with a sigh.

"Oh, I dare say it doesn't meaf anything of the sort."

said Figgins cheerfully. "The wire may mean that he's lost the boat, or it mayn't be from Railton at all. It may be from Knox's people to tell him that his grandmother's got the measles, or something."

"Weally, Figgins—"
"Or from some bookmaker," said Blake. "You know Knox! No good worrying till they come back, anyway."

"Wathah not."
"Whether they're coming or not, we can't let it interfere with the feed," said Fatty Wynn. "I've given the orders to Mrs. Taggles."

"Oh, of course not!" said Tom Merry. "And I'm feeling jolly well ready for a feed, too. We had only a mouthful at tea-time."

"Yes, rather. I had nothing but a pork-pie and some ham and tongue, and a few sausages. I've been saving up my appetite for the feed, you see."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Anyway, we'll have the feed," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Let's get changed, and have the feed, and then we'll think about it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors were soon making great preparations. Fatty Wynn's idea of a really big, record-breaking feed in the Common-room had been hailed with enthusiasm, and all the fellows, or, nearly all, had subscribed to it. Fatty Wynn had been entrusted with the task of giving the orders to Dame Taggles, and he had carried out the task nobly.

There was no doubt that the feed would be a record, and the juniors were all looking forward to it. For the present all thought of the masters and their possible return was put out of every mind. As Fatty Wynn remarked, they had more important matters than that to think of now!

CHAPTER 17.

High Jinks!

FATTY WYNN turned on all the lights in the long, lofty room. From the windows the light gleamed out into the dusky quadrangle, and on the trunks of the old elms.

Fatty Wynn was the first on the scene. He carried a large bag in his hands.

Taggles, the porter, came in, grunting under the weight of huge packages.

Taggles might have been Father Christmas, from the quantity of the supplies he was bringing in. He dumped down his load with a louder grunt than usual.

"Which it's 'eavy, Master Wynn," he remarked.

"Yes, isn't it?" said Fatty Wynn gleefully.

Taggles grunted again.

"Mighty 'eavy for a man gettin' on in years," he remarked.

"Oh, you're not getting on in years, Taggy."

"Which I ham, Master Wynn."

"Then you're jolly lucky not to get the sack, ain't you, Taggles?"

Taggles snorted. He did not care to look at it in that light. But the frown faded from his rugged face as Fatty Wynn grinned and slipped a shilling into his hand.

"Thank you kindly, Master Wynn."

And Taggles stumped away.

The fellows were coming in now. Tom Merry and Lowther and Manners of the Shell were the first, and Kangaroo followed them. Then came Blake and D'Arcy and a crowd of the Fourth.

Soon fellows were coming thick and fast. The Fourth and the Shell of both Houses, with few exceptions, came crowding in; and then came Wally, and a hungry crowd of the Third.

The appearance of the Third Formers was greeted far from politely.

"Get out, you fags!" roared Kangaroo.

"Rats!" said Wally. "We've come."

"What have you come for?"

"The feed, of course."

"Fags are not admitted," said Blake.

Wally sniffed.

"Never mind," said Fatty Wynn hospitably. "There's plenty of grub—more than we can eat. Let 'em all come!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the fags of the Third were allowed to come in. Mere infants from the Second Form took courage from that, and came in, too. Fifth Formers, forgetting for a moment, most conveniently, that they were seniors, and that between them and the Lower School there was a great gulf fixed, bowled along in twos and threes. Lefevre was the first, and he came in with a genial smile and a slightly nervous look.

(Continued on next page.)

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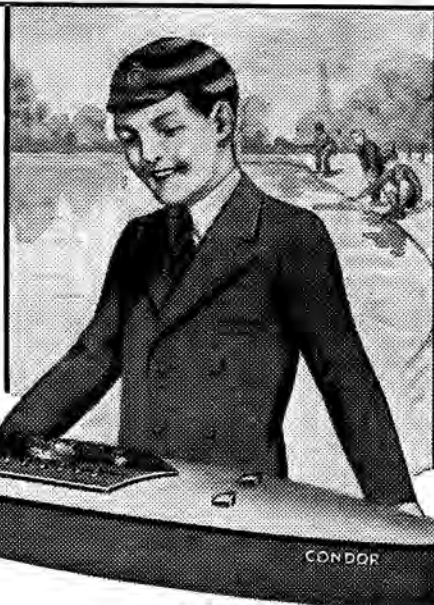
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"I'm going to have tea with you youngsters," he remarked, in a condescending sort of way. "I don't mind. That's what I say—I don't mind."

"You can stay if you like," said Tom Merry. "Help with cutting up the bread, will you?"

Lefevre hesitated for a moment, and then did as he was asked. Other Fifth Formers came in, and were allowed to stay. In the enthusiasm of the moment nobody was inclined to be over particular, and there was no doubt that the celebration was going to be a really gorgeous one.

"It will make history at St. Jim's, this feed will," Fatty Wynn said impressively.

And Fatty Wynn was right.

It was a feed that could be described as "ripping."

There were plenty of guests, and there were plentiful supplies for them, with never any danger of running short.

Cold fowl, chicken pies, ham patties, and cold beef and tongue vanished before the vigorous attacks of the hungry fellows.

At last even Fatty Wynn could eat no more. He sat back in his seat with a fat and happy grunt.

"Well, it was ripping!" he said.

"And it would be extra ripping if Railton came in and found this going on," murmured Monty Lowther.

"Oh, don't croak!"

"Yaas, don't be a beastlay Jonah, deah boy."

Kangaroo jumped up.

"It's been a ripping feed!" he exclaimed.

"Hear, hear!"

"Who says a dance to follow?"

"My hat!"

"Splendid idea!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We can get up an orchestra," explained the Cornstalk, beaming. "Tom Merry's gramophone can be brought down here, and he's got records of waltzes. Then Tom Merry can play the tin whistle, and Manners can put in his violin, and make a regular row, you know, between them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good idea!"

The good idea was carried out at once. Tom Merry and Lowther rushed up to the study for the gramophone, and two or three fellows went to help carry down the records. Manners was willing to play his violin, and Kerr fetched his. Kerr was a splendid player, and Manners was quite passable. On second thoughts, the tin-whistle was omitted, and Herries' offer to chime in with a mouth-organ was declined with thanks.

Tom Merry presided at the gramophone.

He selected the waltz from "Faust" as the first item, and put on a loud needle. The well-known strains crashed out, and the dance commenced. It was necessary for the fellows to dance with one another, as there were no ladies present, but they did not mind that in the least. In fact, they were a great deal less shy in choosing partners than they would have been under more ordinary circumstances.

In some cases, certainly, the fellows forgot whether they were taking the part of the lady or the gentleman, and that led to disaster; but whenever anybody tumbled over it only added to the general hilarity.

The gramophone crashed out, to the accompaniment of the fiddles, and the juniors went whirling round the big room in the mazes of the dance amid wild yells and shouts and roars of laughter.

It was a celebration such as the ancient walls of St. Jim's had never sheltered before.

In the midst of it the door suddenly opened.

A gentleman in hat and overcoat stood on the threshold, blank amazement written in his face.

Behind him appeared others, all bearing signs of travel.

In the wild excitement no one noticed the opening of the door at first, or saw the onlookers standing there, staring blankly.

The gramophone ground on, and the feet of the dancers thundered on the floor.

D'Arcy was the first to see. He uttered a sudden exclamation, and stopped.

"Bai Jove! It's Mr. Wailton!"

The next moment Kangaroo and Lowther bumped into him, and he went over, and they went over him. Five or six more couples added themselves to the heap.

"Look out!"

"Cave!"

"It's Mr. Railton!"

The dance stopped.

The juniors stood as if frozen, staring at the imposing form and amazed face in the doorway.

The gramophone ground on dismally till the record was run down, and then it scratched and scratched.

Tom Merry stood petrified, unable even to stop the gramophone.

Mr. Railton strode into the room.

"What does this mean?" he thundered.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Linton, following him in. "It is a-a-an orgy!"

"Quite an orgy!" added Mr. Selby, the master of the Third.

"Disgraceful!" put in Mr. Ratcliff.

"You young bounders!" murmured Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, trying not to grin.

"This—this is most extraordinary!" said Mr. Railton. "To have a scene like this to greet me, when you knew I was returning at this hour!"

"We—we didn't know, sir," stammered Tom Merry, finding his voice at last.

"What! I wired from Dieppe, and again from New-haven!"

"We received no message, sir," said Tom Merry.

"Did not Knox tell you?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Railton pursed his lips.

"That is very curious," he said. "I hardly know what to say to you. You have all acted in a very outrageous manner. I—I will speak to you about this to-morrow. For the present, go to your dormitories!"

And the juniors filed out.

"Well," said Tom Merry, as they went up to bed—"well, we stayed up pretty late last night, so it's only fair to go to bed early this evening. And we've had rather a day of it, too!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I wonder what's going to happen?" said Blake, with a grunt. "Knox ought to be—be—well, hanging would be too easy for him!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I don't think Railton will come down very heavily to-morrow," said Lowther. "I am almost certain I saw a twinkle in his starboard eye."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors of St. Jim's felt somewhat anxious, however, when they came down next morning. But their uneasiness was soon dispelled. Mr. Railton gave the whole school a severe lecture, and, to judge by Knox's expression, he had already given him one privately.

Then the matter was allowed to drop.

While the Head remained away for his health, Mr. Railton took his place as headmaster of St. Jim's, and things went on in their normal groove under his sway. But it was long before the juniors ceased to talk and chuckle over the "high old time" they had enjoyed when St. Jim's was without masters.

THE END.

FOR NEXT WEDNESDAY—

"THE FIGHTING FORM-MASTER!"

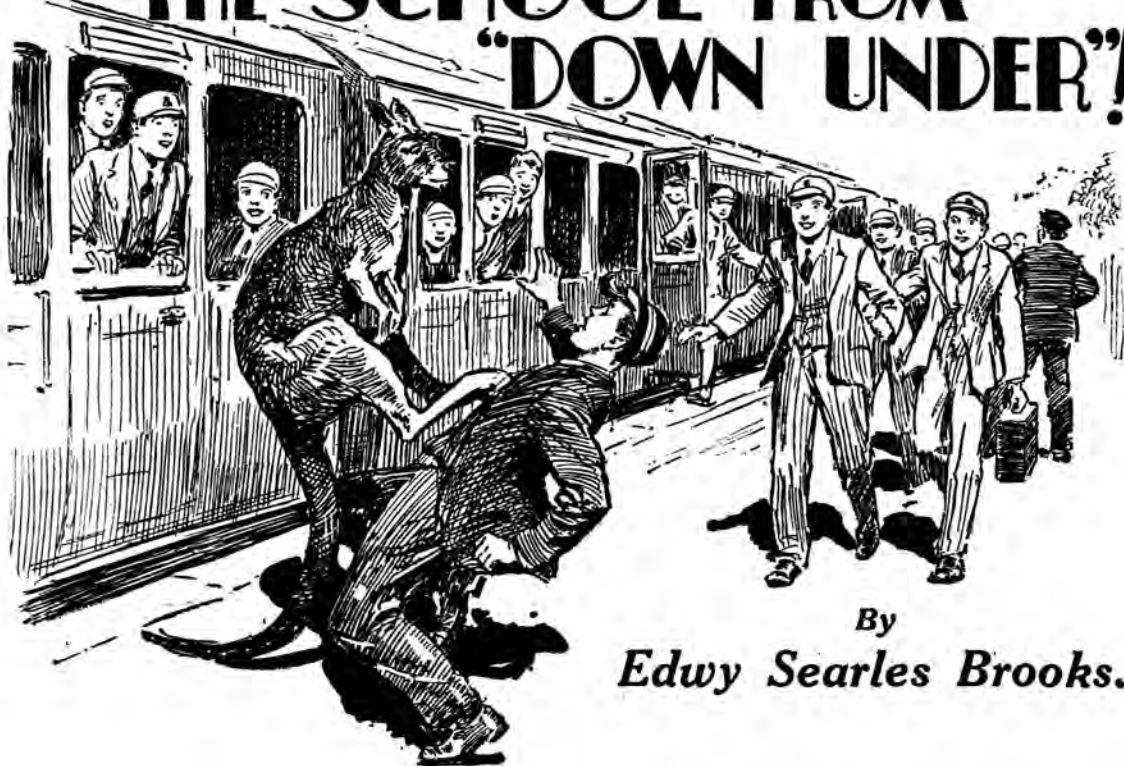
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THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Some schoolboys from Australia take over Ricer House School, near St. Frank's, for the summer, and immediately the two schools are at grips in a friendly "war." After a cricket match between the schools, Jerry Dodd, of St. Frank's, discovers that one of the Aussies, Jim Sayers, is an impostor, but keeps his discovery secret, because he wants to find out what the impostor's game is. Unknown to anyone, Mr. Rutter, an Australian master, is also in league with Sayers. Later, the Aussies jape the St. Frank's chums, but the latter get their revenge.

Baines & Co. Get Busy!

THREE sturdy, fannel-clad figures, one with curly hair, marched arm-in-arm into the old Triangle at St. Frank's.

"Look out!" yelled somebody. "The Aussies are coming here!"

Handforth, Church, McClure, and some others, who were strolling in the Triangle, turned abruptly, and instinctively they were on their guard against the rival schoolboys. In the glaring hot sunshine of the early August morning Curly Baines and McVittie and Kennedy, of the school from "down under," calmly advanced.

"Don't get nervous," said Curly Baines coolly, "we're here on a peaceful mission."

"Who's nervous?" demanded Handforth, striding up and deliberately eyeing the Australian schoolboys from tip to toe. "I suppose you're asking for trouble, walking in here like this?"

"I've said we've come on a peaceful mission," replied Baines. "We want to fix up a cricket match with your junior skipper."

"Well, Nipper's in the Common-room, if you want him," said Handforth. "We can't play you this afternoon, anyhow. We're going over to Bannington Grammar School."

The three Australian boys were escorted into the Ancient House, down the passage, and then into the Junior Common-room. No sooner had they entered than Curly Baines sniffed the air.

"Who's using perfume?" he asked in surprise.

"Rats!" said Handforth, with exaggerated carelessness. "It's only the flowers."

The visitors then saw, much to their astonishment, that a

large vase of flowers stood on one of the tables. Nipper, who had been chatting with Travers and Pitt, grinned. There were more flowers over by the window, and still more on the mantelpiece.

"This is, I suppose, the Junior Common-room?" asked Baines politely. "We haven't strolled, by any chance, into Mrs. Wilkes' boudoir?"

Nipper chuckled.

"Don't blame us, old man," he replied. "Blame Handy." The visitors turned their gaze on the uncomfortable Handforth.

"Flowers—you?" said Curly incredulously. "It doesn't make sense."

"Go and eat coke!" roared Handforth, with unnecessary violence.

"I think we'd better explain to the Aussie chaps, old man," said Nipper gently. "You see, Baines, it's like this. We're pretty friendly with some of the girls at the Moor View School, and it happens that they have a tennis tournament at Bannington this afternoon. We're going to meet a crowd of them after the cricket match, and then we'll bring them home to a feed. Handy thought that flowers would be appropriate, and he's been decorating the room."

Handforth turned red, whilst Curly Baines & Co. grinned appreciatively.

"I'm relieved!" said Curly thankfully. "For one horrid moment I suspected that your English chums were 'sissies.' We wouldn't have flowers in our quarters at any price."

"Neither would we ordinarily," chuckled Nipper. "But you know what girls are. They like that sort of thing."

"Then why not—" Curly paused, and a thoughtful look came into his eyes.

"Why not what?" demanded Handforth.

"Nothing, chum!" said Curly, smiling. "It doesn't matter."

But at that moment a wheeze had been born. Baines talked about cricket, but that idea was roving round the back of his mind. And later, when he was back at his own school, he laughed uproariously.

It was a half-holiday at the Australian school, just as it was at St. Frank's. But Baines & Co. had no cricket fixture, and they were not really sorry for the afternoon was oppressively hot. Outside, in the shade of the trees in the quadrangle, the air quivered with the sultry heat.

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"Phew! The river seems to be the best place for us this afternoon," remarked Richards. "Gee! This heat reminds me of home."

"Yes, you get this awful, sticky heat in Brisbane, don't you?" asked Kennedy, who hailed from New South Wales. "Now, in my home town—"

"Don't let's argue," put in Curly Baines diplomatically. "We're all Aussies, and it seems to me we ought to do something to get square with our English rivals. How about japing them?"

"Too hot," said McVittie lazily.

"It won't be hot for long," said Baines. "There's a thunderstorm brewing—clouds are gathering already. That means that Nipper and his chums will abandon the cricket match and come home. But here's the point—St. Frank's at the moment is empty."

"Is there any point in that fact?" asked Sayers.

"You bet there is!" retorted Baines. "All the seniors have gone off, too. We can crash right in, and there won't be a soul to ask questions. Listen, cobbors! Uncle Curly has a brain-wave."

The others were not very enthusiastic—at first. But as Curly Baines elaborated his scheme there were many chuckles. Before long the chuckles changed into roars of laughter. There was only one boy whose face failed to reflect the general amusement. That boy was Jim Sayers—or, at least, the impostor who called himself Jim Sayers. He stood just apart from the others, but he listened to every word, and on his face there was an expression of gloating satisfaction.

When the others went hurrying off into the village he was with them, apparently as enthusiastic for the good-natured jape as the rest.

Yelling with laughter, they descended upon the village. They invaded the calm, dignified old draper's shop and made some surprising purchases; then, armed with various packages, they went in a body to St. Frank's.

As Curly Baines had said, nobody hindered them.

The sun-scorched Triangle was empty; the whole school looked deserted. Most of the seniors and juniors had gone off to cricket, and the few who were not interested in cricket were on the river, or picnicking in the woods. Not even a master was in evidence.

"My sons," said Curly cheerfully, "the place is ours!"

Boldly they marched into the Ancient House, and just as boldly they penetrated into the Junior Common-room.

"Not bad," said Curly, as he looked round. "But I think we can improve on it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Common-room was certainly looking tip-top. Additional tables had been brought in, and they were gleaming with snowy white cloths; there were flowers on each table, and glasses and silver gleamed on them, too. Everything—except the food—was ready for the evening feast, when the St. Frank's juniors would entertain their girl chums of the Moor View School.

From outside, and far distant, came a growling rumble of thunder.

"Come on, cobbors!" said Curly Baines briskly. "We've got to get busy! Better lock the door!"

For a solid hour the Australian juniors, chuckling among themselves, worked. Meanwhile, the sunshine had dwindled and the storm clouds gathered rapidly.

Jim Sayers worked with the rest; but his thoughts were on a scheme of his own. When all was nearly finished he made an excuse, and succeeded in getting upstairs unobserved. When he eventually came downstairs again he found Baines and the others in the lobby, just about to make their exit.

"Hallo! What were you doing upstairs?" asked Baines sharply.

"Nothing much—just having a look round," replied Sayers, with a shrug. "Time we went, isn't it?"

The thunder was crashing, and when the Australian boys got outside they found great raindrops splashing down.

But they didn't mind the rain. Their work inside the Ancient House was accomplished, and they were highly satisfied.

The St. Frank's Flood!

"**R**ATS! What a rotten washout!" said Handforth disgustedly.

The full force of the thunderstorm had burst over Bannington, and for over half an hour rain had been descending in torrential sheets. The cricket match against the Grammar School, of course, had been abandoned. Even after the storm had passed—which it did, leaving a clear sky—further play was out of the question. For the playing fields were half flooded, water lying in great pools all over the ground.

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The sun was soon shining again, which the juniors completely failed to appreciate now.

"There's only one thing to be done, my sons," said Nipper practically. "No sense in stopping here, so we might as well collect Irene & Co. and get home to that feed."

"Not a bad idea," said Travers, nodding. "Let's go."

When they arrived at the Bannington High School for Girls, where the tennis tournament had been in progress, they found their girl chums very despondent. Further tennis was impossible. The grass courts were flooded.

"It's no good waiting, of course," said Irene Manners ruefully. "The courts won't be playable again to-day. Isn't it a shame?"

"You're no worse off than we are, old girl," said Travers, with a shrug. "Our cricket is messed up for to-day, too. Still, we'll make up for it with our feed."

The cricketers and the tennis players soon forgot their disappointment. They all went home cheerfully enough in the bright sunshine which had followed the storm.

There were nine or ten girls invited to the "spread," including Irene Manners and Doris Berkeley and Mary Summers and Marjorie Temple and Winnie Pitt and Vera Wilkes.

"It's not just an ordinary feed," said Nipper, as the girls were escorted into the Ancient House. "We've prepared something special—and we've made the Common-room look rather nice, too. It was Handy's idea. Flowers and things, you know."

"Well done, Ted!" laughed Irene.

They had just reached the Common-room, and, with a flourish, Nipper flung open the door.

"Enter, fair damsels!" he invited. "No need to tell you to be at home—Hey! What the—Great Scott!"

The last two words came out of him in an absolute yell. And the others, staring into the Junior Common-room, gaped in dumbfounded amazement. For the room presented an astonishing spectacle, and the heavy reek of cheap scent pervaded the air.

Round each table was a dainty frilling of lace; the mantelpiece was artistically decorated with gaudily flowered cretonne, the windows were hung with highly coloured lace curtains, and everywhere—in every corner of the room, in every nook and cranny—ribbons were festooned. Pink ribbons, pale blue ribbons, mauve ribbons, rose ribbons, and, in fact, ribbons of every colour of the rainbow. They were tied into artistic bows round the table-legs, round the backs of the chairs, on the electric light wires, and in all manner of strange and weird places.

Speechless, the schoolboy hosts stared into the room.

It was Irene Manners who broke the silence.

"My, how you must have worked!" she said admiringly.

"And doesn't the room look nice?"

"Glorious!" chorused the other girls.

Handforth seemed to be in danger of choking.

"Nun-nice?" he gurgled. "You—you mean, you like it?"

"It's lovely!" said Doris enthusiastically.

"As pretty as a picture!" declared Mary. "I think it was ripping of you chaps to decorate the room like this!"

"But we didn't!" exclaimed Nipper, his face red with wrath. "Great Scott! You don't think we'd do this, do you? Phoo! And the awful niff, too!"

"But—but didn't you do all this?" asked Irene.

"No; the Aussies did it!" replied Nipper fiercely.

"The Aussies!" yelled Handforth, daylight bursting upon him in a flood.

"Who else?" said Nipper. "Don't you remember Baines coming here this morning and grinning at the flowers? While we were away in Bannington at the cricket those Aussies came here and—did this!"

"My word! I'm glad you've explained!" said Irene, with relief. "We girls were prepared to praise you—just out of politeness, you know."

"There's something dripping," said Church suddenly, as he strode into the Common-room. "Hallo! Look at this whacking great pool of water on the floor!"

Now that they were in the room they noticed that there was something wrong. Staring up at the ceiling, they saw that water was dripping from a dozen points—and, indeed, in one spot it was a continuous stream. Two of the tables were soaked, and a lot of the decorations ruined. Until the boys had actually crowded into the room they had not observed these details.

"Must be the storm," said Handforth, puzzled. "The rain's got in somewhere—"

"But it can't be rain," said Nipper sharply. "The dormitories are overhead, and— Look out, there! Move aside, Handy!" he added in a yell. "That ceiling—"

Swoooooooooooooosh—swish—craaaaaaash!

Handforth, who happened to be standing apart from the others, received the full dose. For a great patch of plaster, bulging out like a blister from the ceiling, fell, followed by about a dozen gallons of water.

The burly leader of Study D went sprawling over,

smothered with wet plaster and drenched to the skin. He sat up, dazed and bewildered.

"Who—who did that?" he gasped wildly.

He stared up, and a stream of water struck him in the face. He leapt to his feet, plaster falling from him in a shower.

"It's—it's upstairs somewhere!" he gasped. "Somebody's left a tap running, or something! It's a flood!"

Excited, bewildered, the boys and girls dashed down the passage to the lobby. Handforth was the first to go tearing upstairs, and just at the top he collided violently with an elderly gentleman in sombre black, who was on the point of descending.

"Sorry, sir!" gasped Handforth.

"Eh? Oh, one moment, young man!" said the elderly gentleman, who was none other than Professor Sylvester Tucker, the absent-minded science master. "There is something I wish to ask. Dear me, what ever can it be?"

He blinked at Handforth mildly, but Handforth had already dashed by. Nipper and some others were already ascending the stairs quickly.

"By George," came a roar from Handforth, "it's here!"

At the end of the landing on which Handforth stood there was a powerful fire hydrant, with a hose attached, the other

With a roaring tumult the flood descended the stairs. It swamped Nipper and the other boys half-way up; it sent them hurtling down, Handforth and the professor inextricably mixed up amongst them all.

But this was not all. The surging flood spread itself out and swamped down into the lobby. Shrieks arose from the Moor View girls. Before they could move an inch they were drenched to the skin. Crashes sounded from the Common-room—proving that the rest of the ceiling had collapsed. The damage was tremendous.

The flood, continuing its triumphant course, went swirling and splashing into the junior passage, pouring into studies, flooding them.

Mr. Alington Wilkes, the Housemaster of the Ancient House, who had come on the scene at that moment, found the flood of water surging round his ankles. In utter consternation he ran into the lobby.

"Great heavens!" he ejaculated, aghast.

For what he saw staggered him. Boys and girls, completely drenched, were sprawling all over the floor, most of them wallowing in a foot of water. They were scrambling to their feet, gasping and spluttering. Near the foot of the stairs Handforth and Professor Tucker, locked



"Look out, Handy!" exclaimed Nipper. "The ceiling!" But the warning came too late. Swooooosh! Before Handforth could move, a great patch of plaster came away from the ceiling, and descended with gallons of water upon Edward Oswald's head!

end of which disappeared through the fanlight of a dormitory. Through the open fanlight came the ominous sound of rushing water.

"My dormitory!" gasped Handforth, leaping forward.

No doubt Professor Tucker, wandering amiably along the corridor, had seen that hosepipe—and had wondered. The remarkable feature of the whole affair was that nobody else had noticed it earlier.

It was a pity that Handforth's chums were not with him at the moment. For they would certainly have prevented him from taking the action he did. With reckless thoughtlessness he grabbed the handle of the dormitory door, and turned it. Perhaps he forgot, in the excitement of the moment, that the door opened outwards.

It certainly opened, and out of the dormitory came a rush of solid water. It hit Edward Oswald Handforth in the chest, and carried him along like a cork.

"Hi!" he howled. "Look out—Ugggggggh!"

He crashed into something and clutched convulsively. As a matter of fact, the "something" was Professor Tucker, and that unfortunate gentleman was swept off his feet in a flash. He and Handforth were washed down the stairs by the torrent.

Swooooosh!

together, were being extricated by Nipper and Travers and one or two more.

"What—what has happened?" shouted Mr. Wilkes.

"Goodness knows, sir!" gasped Nipper. "Handy went upstairs, and—then this happened!"

"The fire-hose—the hydrant—on the landing!" gurgled Handforth, pointing. "It's—it's full on! My—my dormitory's flooded. I opened the door—"

"You hopeless chump!" shouted Nipper. "You might have known—"

He broke off, and went splashing upstairs, for the flood was still coming down. The staircase looked like a waterfall.

On the landing above Nipper caught his breath in with startled consternation. For in a flash he saw the meaning of it all. The dormitory door stood wide open—the room itself was wrecked. The great nozzle of the big hosepipe was sending forth a terrific stream of water. Frantically, Nipper dashed to the hydrant and turned the controlling wheel.

"I—I've turned it off!" he panted, as he ran downstairs again.

"The ceiling's gone—and the Common-room is wrecked—"

from end to end!" shouted one of the other Removites, dashing along the passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd of soaked girls and boys heard that laugh, and glances were exchanged. Other fellows had come on the scene now—boys who were only wet about the feet. Some were standing in the open doorway.

"Who was that laughing?" asked Mr. Wilkes, in a terrible voice.

Handforth leapt to the door, and the next second his jaw squared itself ominously. For out in the Triangle, yelling with laughter, stood nearly a score of Australian boys! Curly Baines was in the forefront, with McVittie, Kennedy, the Taylor brothers, Richards, Sayers, and the others.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How do you like your pretty Common-room?" yelled Curly.

"By George!" fumed Handforth.

He was rushing out, and the others crowded in the Ancient House doorway. In that first moment the Aussies did not notice that Handforth was drenching wet.

"Just a minute, you Aussies!" shouted Nipper, from the doorway. "Did you work this jape on us?"

"Surely! Why not?" chuckled Curly Baines. "Don't you think it was funny?"

"Funny!" howled Handforth. "You—you dirty cads! Look at me! And all the girls, too! Do you realise that our guests—all girls—are drenched through your rotten jape?"

The Australian boys ceased to laugh.

"I don't understand," said Baines, striding forward. "Drenched! Jumping kangaroos, he's right, coppers!"

"You're very innocent, all of a sudden!" exclaimed Nipper. "Just now you admitted that you worked this jape. Do you think it was funny to put that hosepipe through the faintlight of the dormitory, and then turn it full on? That room has been flooded for an hour, I should think!"

"Hose!" gasped Baines, his voice filled with consternation and amazement. "But—but we didn't do that, Nipper! By cripes! You don't think we'd play such a low-down trick?"

Suddenly, before Nipper could answer, Baines spun round. His face had gone deathly pale. For in that second he had remembered something. A picture came before his eyes—the picture of Jim Sayers coming downstairs, with an evil look on his face.

Baines strode forward and seized Sayers by the shoulder. "You!" he said tensely. "Do you know anything about that flood?"

"Take your hands off me," said Sayers unpleasantly, as he gave himself a shake. "Supposing I do know something?"

"Did you turn that hose on?" roared Curly.

"Yes, I did!" said Jim Sayers, grinning. "And why shouldn't I? You fellows came here to work a jape, and I thought I would improve it. It seems to me it worked pretty well!"

Sayers' Amazing Attitude!

FOR some seconds there was a tense, ominous silence. It was broken by Sayers himself, who abruptly burst into a roar of laughter. Yet there was no amusement in that laughter—it was a wild, unpleasant cackle.

"Yes, I did it!" he shouted gloatingly. "We Australians have got to show these English fools that we are top dogs!"

It was an amazing statement, and the St. Frank's boys were so startled, at first, that they could only gather round and stare.

Amongst them was Jerry Dodd, the Australian boy from Bathurst—the same part of New South Wales which was also Sayers' home.

But Jerry Dodd had known from the first that this boy was not Jim Sayers. He had kept his own counsel until now, for he believed that there was some base and treacherous reason for the Australian boy's masquerade.

"I'm quite proud of myself," continued Sayers boldly, his voice serene, his manner triumphant. "I don't believe in namby-pamby japes. There's no fun in being gentle. When you do a thing, do it properly. That's my motto!"

He roared with that same merciless laughter.

"And isn't it a good jape, coppers?" he yelled, glaring triumphantly at his schoolfellows. "Look what we've done! Ruined their feast—drenched them all to the skin—and wrecked their Common-room!"

"Are you mad, Sayers?" demanded Curly Baines harshly.

"No; I'm enjoying the fun," retorted Sayers.

"You cad! You hound!" exclaimed Kennedy, the boy from Bourke. "You've brought disgrace on us all. That's what you've done!"

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"Yes!" cried McVittie. "The joke we played was good-natured—but you turned it into an outrage. And you stand there and boast about it!"

"Of course I boast," retorted Jim Sayers. "And I'm going to do a lot more boasting, too. The trouble with you fellows is that you haven't any backbone. You're afraid to go the whole hog."

Jerry Dodd stood listening and watching. He was bewildered, confused. At the same time, rage was welling up within him.

He knew Jim Sayers well—he had been his chum in Australia. Jim was a fine chap, a sportsman. This fellow who called himself Jim Sayers was an unutterable hound. He was using Jim's name, and, apparently, he was doing the best he could to disgrace it as much as possible.

As that thought came to him, Jerry jumped.

"Why, of course!" he panted, a flush coming to his face. "That's it! The cad is doing it on purpose—to ruin Jim's name! But why? What can it all mean?"

Another roar of triumphant laughter came from the boy who called himself Sayers. Something prompted Jerry Dodd to leap forward. His eyes were blazing, and he pushed some of the other Australian boys roughly aside. At last he stood face to face with Sayers.

"Just a minute, you!" he said ominously. "I've got something to say."

"Say it!" jeered Sayers. "Go ahead, clobber! By cripes! You're an Aussie, too, aren't you? Yes, and from Bathurst, my own town. Go ahead!"

"You cur!" flamed Jerry Dodd, boiling with rage. "What do you mean by coming to England and mas—"

"Silence, everybody!" came a sharp, imperious command.

Jerry had been about to say "masquerading as Jim Sayers," but he never uttered the words. For the voice which interrupted was commanding.

On the Ancient House steps stood Mr. James Kingswood, headmaster of St. Frank's. By this time most of the soaked boys and girls had come right out into the evening sunshine. From the Modern House, the East House and the West House, other boys had come, and the Triangle was fairly crowded with spectators. It was, indeed, a sensation.

The silence which followed the Head's appearance was breathless. "Fighting Jim," usually cheerful of face, had never looked more stern. His lips were set in a thin line, and his eyes glowed with a dangerous light.

"I understand that you Australian boys came here this afternoon and played a joke?" said the Head deliberately.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Sayers, throwing his head back and shouting with laughter.

"Silence, you impudent boy!" snapped Mr. Kingswood.

Sayers became silent—for there was a note in that command which demanded respect.

"We played a joke, sir—but there was no harm in it," said Curly Baines quickly. "We came here while the juniors were away, and we decorated their Common-room. That's all. We made a show of cretonnes, ribbons, and things—and we sprayed perfume all over the place. But that's all we did."

"There was no harm in that," said Mr. Kingswood quietly.

It was Sayers who turned the hose on, and who did it in such a way that nothing would be discovered until a lot of damage had been done," went on Baines, his eyes flaming. "He's one of us, sir—he belongs to our school—but we don't recognise him. He's beneath our contempt."

"Did you bring him with you when you came?" asked the Head.

"Yes, sir—but only to help us in the Common-room."

"I see. Sayers went off alone, then, and played that other trick," said Mr. Kingswood. "What have you to say about it, Sayers? I understand that you have admitted your guilt?"

"Aw, come off it, sir!" said Jim Sayers, with contempt in his voice. "It's not a question of guilt. It was only a joke. Can't these English fellows appreciate a practical joke?"

"So you call it a joke, Sayers?"

"You bet it was a joke," grinned Sayers. "When we Australians play tricks, we play them properly!"

"Most interesting," said Fighting Jim, nodding. "I am very glad, Sayers, that you are so frank about it. So you think you did something clever?"

"Well, you've got to admit that it was smart," said Sayers coolly.

His attitude was startling. Not a word of excuse—no regret. Openly, boldly, before the headmaster of St. Frank's himself, he was revelling in his ill-natured work.

"It was smart, then?" repeated the Head ominously. "You call it smart to turn a powerful fire hose on, and allow the water to flood an upper room?"

"Well, you see, it was Handforth's dormitory," grinned Sayers. "I don't like Handforth much, and thought it would be a good joke to ruin his dormitory."



Mr. E. S. Brooks welcomes letters from readers. Write to him c/o The Editor, The GEM, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

PLEASE don't forget, John Cox, Birmingham, that this little chat of mine is concerned only with details, facts, answers, and so on and so forth, concerning the boys of St. Frank's. So the remarks you make about the Tom Merry stories are not my affair. As Mr. Clifford himself has no chat in the paper, perhaps you had better make your suggestions to the Editor.

I have not written another story about the "Island Above the Clouds," R. Horsey, Bexley. Lord Derrimore and Umloisi

"By George!" gasped Handforth. "Why, you—you—you—"

"Hold it, young 'un!" said Mr. Kingswood quietly. "I see, Sayers. You deliberately flooded the dormitory, knowing that the water would soak through and ruin the ceiling of the room underneath?"

"I was hoping it would ruin the room altogether, sir," replied Sayers, to the utter amazement of his schoolfellows. "It's the Common-room underneath—all prepared for a big feast this evening."

"Well, it will probably give you a great deal of satisfaction to know that the Common-room is an absolute wreck," said the Head. "The entire ceiling has fallen, most of the furniture is smashed and spoilt, and, altogether, it will cost a big sum to have the necessary repairs done."

Sayers laughed. "I seem to have caused a lot of damage in a short time," he said contentedly.

"And the bill will, naturally, be presented to your people," continued the Head smoothly. "Are you still smiling, Sayers?"

Sayers was not only still smiling, but roaring with laughter again.

"Go ahead, sir!" he invited, with the utmost insolence. "My uncle is Mr. Bartholomew Easton, and he's my guardian. He's a bit of a skinflint, too." His eyes were full of amusement. "Send your bill to him, and see what happens!"

"Your impertinence, Sayers, is intolerable!" said the Head curtly. "If you were in this school, you would be instantly expelled for this abominable outrage!"

"But I'm not in this school—and, if it comes to that, I wouldn't belong to an English school at any price!" said Sayers contemptuously. "As for having me expelled from my own school—let them try it on! Do you think I care?"

"You had better use a different tone, young man," said Mr. Kingswood grimly.

"Oh, yes! You have no authority over me," jeered Sayers. "Report me to Atherton, if you like—he's my headmaster. What can he do?"

Even Mr. Kingswood himself was amazed. Obviously, Sayers was doing everything in his power to make things worse; he was glorying in his own outrageous conduct.

"I'm not one of those milk-and-water saps who do things, and then try to escape responsibility," he said, with a shrug. "I committed this outrage, as you call it, and I'm ready to stand the racket. Well, what have you got to say to that?"

"I'm beginning to think, Sayers, that you are mad," replied the Head.

"Let them expel me—and they'll have to send me home," went on Sayers, smiling. "That's just what I want!"

"Indeed! Did you deliberately act in this way, so that you would be sent home?"

"Not a chance!" sighed Jim Sayers. "They won't send me home. But while I'm in England I'm going to have a good time."

It was very seldom that Fighting Jim Kingswood was at a loss. This boy baffled him. He felt, indeed, that he was suffering a loss of dignity by continuing the conversation.

"You had better go, Sayers!" he said sharply. "I shall communicate at once with your headmaster."

"Suits me," said Sayers, grinning.

"I wonder if it will suit you when we get you alone?" asked Curly Baines, his voice full of threat. "Come on,

have not revisited that extraordinary spot in the Atlantic. I'm afraid I cannot tell you offhand how many boys there are at St. Frank's. Naturally, I cannot bring a quarter of them into my stories. If I attempted to mention all the boys by name, the yarns would look like a telephone directory. Nelson Lee's age is, I should judge, round about the forty mark.

"Names List"—No. 4. West House, Remove: Study O—Reginald Pitt, Jack Grey; Study P—Cornelius Trotwood, Nicodemus Trotwood, Fatty Little; Study Q—Johnny Onions, Bertie Onions, Guy Pepys; Study R—the Hon. Douglas Singleton, Hussi Ranjit Lal Khan.

The very first St. Frank's stories, Yendys Walker, Chiswick, appeared in the old "Nelson Lee Library." That was over seventeen years ago. And I believe I'm correct in saying that a St. Frank's story, in some form or another, has been on sale every week since. No, I'm wrong. For the first few months the St. Frank's stories appeared fortnightly. Yes, Nipper's parents are dead, and Nelson Lee is his guardian. I don't think he has any special girl chum at the Moor View School—unless, perhaps, she is Mary Summers. I think he has a bit of a soft spot for her. Yes, rather, I'll look out for letters from Frances and Ray. I hope they won't be long in coming!

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

cobbers! We'll take Sayers back to our own school—and there'll be something doing on the way!"

For the first time Sayers looked alarmed, as the Australian boys closed round him grimly.

"Keep your hands off me!" he said truculently.

But the other Australian schoolboys took no notice. They seized him, and held him.

"You've disgraced us, and you've disgraced our school," said Curly Baines, tense with anger. "We're going to square things up in our own way."

It was an unpleasant shock for the schoolboy schemer. He was prepared for official punishment, but he dreaded what his own schoolfellows might do to him.

Suddenly an expression of relief came into his eyes, and he dropped all resistance. A man in white flannels and a striped blazer was hurrying to the spot.

"Just one moment, there!" said the newcomer, his voice sharp and commanding. "Baines! McVittie! Kennedy! Take your hands off Sayers!"

Curly Baines and his chums glared. But there was no help for it. The newcomer was Mr. Rutter, one of the masters of the Australian school.

"Mr. Atherton has sent me over to fetch our boys, sir," explained Mr. Rutter, turning to the headmaster of St. Frank's. "He wishes me to express his deep regret for what has happened. Please rest assured that the culprits will be punished with the utmost severity."

"You are quickly on the scene, Mr.—er—"

"Rutter, sir!" said the other. "I am Mr. Atherton's second-in-command. One of your own masters—Mr. Wilkes, I believe—rang us up and informed us of what had happened. Mr. Atherton sent me over on the instant."

The Australian master was looking stern.

"Your prompt action is gratifying, Mr. Rutter," said the Head gravely. "It appears that this unfortunate outrage was committed by one boy—Sayers. The others indulged in a practical joke, but it was quite harmless and good-natured. I may add that Sayers has not only confessed his guilt, but brags of it, and glories in his infamous conduct."

They talked for some moments in low tones, Mr. Rutter becoming more and more grim every moment. Jim Sayers stood by, insolently indifferent. Curly Baines and his chums had retired, and were standing in a hot, angry group.

"I understand perfectly, Mr. Kingswood," said the Australian master, at length. "I have Mr. Atherton's authority for saying that he will accept full responsibility: and the bill for the damages, when it is presented, will undoubtedly be sent to this wretched boy's people."

Mr. Rutter reached out a strong hand, and seized the surprised Sayers by the back of his coat collar.

"Forgive me for leaving so abruptly, Mr. Kingswood, but I've got to take this boy back to his own school," he said. "Now, Sayers—march! Baines and McVittie will come with me."

He ordered the other Australian boys to return immediately to the River House; they went promptly.

"Now!" said Mr. Rutter, his voice cutting like a whip-lash.

Without relaxing his fierce grip, he forced Sayers before him, and Curly Baines and McVittie walked silently by his side.

(Next week: The boy who laughed while he was being "flogged"!)

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PEN PALS

(Continued from page 13.)

Peter Bryceson, 40, Earls Court Square, London, S.W.5, wants a pen pal in Italy or Germany.

Jack Willis, P.O. Margate, S. Coast, Natal, South Africa, wants pen pals in England, Europe, Canada, and India; age 15-16.

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